"For The Want Of A Nail" things can change
Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/31745317.

Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death

Category:
F/M, Gen, M/M

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Dabi & Todoroki Shouto, Dabi | Todoroki Touya & Takami Keigo | Hawks, Hatsume Mei & Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku & Nedzu, Hatsume Mei & Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Shinsou Hitoshi, Class 1-A & Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Hatsume Mei/Midoriya Izuku, Kaminari Denki/Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku/Todoroki Shouto, Midoriya Izuku/Uraraka Ochako

Character:
Fukukado Emi | Ms. Joke, Mr. Brave (My Hero Academia), Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Nedzu (My Hero Academia), Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Toogata Mirio, Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Kayama Nemuri | Midnight, Inui Ryou | Hound Dog, Kan Sekijirou | Vlad King, Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Shinsou Hitoshi, Usagiyama Rumi | Miruko, Hadou Nejire, Amajiki Tamaki, Gran Torino (My Hero Academia), Dabi | Todoroki Touya, Toga Himiko, Iguchi Shuuichi | Spinner, Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Takeyama Yuu | Mount Lady, Tsukauchi Naomasa, Nishiya Shinji | Kamui Woods, Todoroki Enji | Endeavor, Takami Keigo | Hawks, Takagi Ken | Rock Lock, Hatsume Mei, Maijima Higari | Power Loader

Additional Tags:
Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, BAMF Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku Does Not Have One for All Quirk, Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia Manga Spoilers, Bakugo Katsuki goes to Therapy, Adopted Toga Himiko, Quirkless Discrimination (My Hero Academia), Quirk Analysis (My Hero Academia), Genius Midoriya

Izuku, Scary Midoriya Izuku, Confident Midoriya Izuku, Vigilante Bakugou Katsuki, Vigilante Midoriya Izuku, Suicidal Midoriya Izuku, Passive Suicidal Ideation, Analyst Midoriya Izuku, Hacker Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki Redemption, Self-Loathing, Bisexual Kaminari Denki, Angst, Cliffhangers, Slow Burn, Eventual Romance, flirting as a weapon, Murder, Support Department Midoriya Izuku, Chaotic Midoriya Izuku, Chaotic Hatsume Mei, Multiverse, Watching, Reaction, Author has ADHD

Language:
English

Series:
Part 2 of What could have been.

Collections:
Dekuverse_Reactions, BNHA Treasure Box, Fandoms React to Canon/Fanfictions, Characters Watch/Read Canon/Fanon, 18 Shots but these will be the 19th shot, Banco Fic, My Favourite Bnha stories to read, Rhynes MHA favs, i did my waiting... twelve years of it, My Reaction Academia, Plus Ultra BNHA fics ✊, watching the series-fic, Good Reading books/Watching shows fics, Autiser's Favorites, Ongoing Fics (bnha), Watch/Read The Series, I will re read it again insted of studying for sure, thewanderingcat's favorite My Hero Academia fics, TBC, Characters react to their own series/movies, Characters Explores Fandom, Boku no hero academia, Stalker's Amongst Stalker's, BNHA keepers, Characters react to source material, Characters Watching, Hand-picked by a picky-person, Holy shit i love these (too good for just bookmarks), My Fav MHA Fics❤, ☆*: .｡. o(≧▽≦)o .｡.:*☆, BaNHAmmer, То что нравится, MHA and som stuff, BNHA fics que amo, Mha fics That are Geva approved & recommended, Saphs TBR, My Own Pit of Madness

Stats:
Published: 2021-06-05 Updated: 2023-07-12 Words: 308,418
Chapters: 124/?

"For The Want Of A Nail" things can change

by HeadcaseKiller

Summary

My Hero Academia cast reacting to the "For Want Of A Nail" series as written by Clouds.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

- Inspired by Deku? I think he's some pro... by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)
- Inspired by Mastermind: Strategist For Hire by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)
- Inspired by Mastermind: Rise of Anarchy by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)
- Inspired by Viridian: The Green Guide by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)
- Inspired by Cheat Code: Support Strategist by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)
- Inspired by Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)

What does that mean?

'For The Want Of A Nail,' that's what the entity type into the search bar. Her deep blue form brightened as she bounced from heel to toe and back again. The white screen with a loading bar slowly filling, Midoriya couldn't help but ask "What does that mean?"

The being turned toward their audience "The title you mean?" Green bean nodded "Well it comes from an old poem, I think. The entity known as Clouds, who is responsible for recording this series of stories, chose it to show how the smallest decision can change a great many things."

"I don't believe I've heard this particular poem." Nedzu addresses Headcase "Would you kindly share it with us?"

"But of course!" The light takes a few breathes to calm themselves
"For want of a nail, the shoe was lost
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost
For want of a horse, the rider was lost
For want of a rider, the message was lost
For want of a message the battle was lost
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail."

Momo politely stated, "In essence, we will be watching multiple worlds that start at the same point, but become very different like the butterfly effect."

"Yes, however, I would remind you that this starting event isn't likely to be the only difference simply the one with possibly the biggest impact."

"Young Headcase, may I ask what the starting part of these stories might be?" All Might in his skeleton form said, quite nicely I might add.

"Oh, why your first meeting with Young Midoriya is the catalyst for these stories." All Might's eyes widened with worry at that as they should.

Aizawa stands to be sure he has everyone's attention "Exactly how many worlds is this 'Clouds' person recording for us to see?"

"There are currently, as we begin watching, 4 stories in the 'For Want Of A Nail' series. The plan is to cycle through the stories in one 'chapter' "she did air quotes at that "at a time switching between the stories until we catch up to where Clouds has recorded so far. Does that answer your question?"

"Yes, it does." Aizawa deadpans.

"Yo, think you could give us a sweet summary of the stories we'll be seeing, ya dig?" Present Mic; always the performer.

"Unfortunately a summary might spoil some big reveals so I'm afraid not."

Izuku kindly raises his hand. Headcase gestures to let him speak. "Is there a way to differentiate the different worlds like their titles or maybe an alias the main 'character'" air quotes via cinnamon roll is adorable "uses so we can compare the worlds or something?"

"Wonderful idea Midoriya these stories follow you..."

"WHAT!? What the hell happened to put the nerd at the center of everything!?" Bakugo shouts interrupting a now slightly miffed being of light. The silence drags on as Headcase simply uses her disappointed face to stare the literal atomic blond down. Eventually, Kirishima and the rest of the Bakusquad get him to sit so their surprisingly patient host can continue.

"As I was saying in each of these stories you end up with a different code name. in the first, you become Deku just like your world. In the second, you choose the name Mastermind. In the third, you are given the name Viridian. In the fourth, you take the name Cheat Code."

"Is there any reason you said each of those in a different way?" Todoroki, the resident conspiracy theorist, always asked the most interesting questions. Headcase barely suppresses a smirk as the Dekusquad tries to convince him that not everything has a hidden meaning.

There comes a ding from the screen, drawing everyone's attention as it lit up with 'chapter select' atop and a list falling below it, in a language, it is assumed only the entity can read. The light being asks "Is everyone settled and ready to begin?" A multitude of affirmations are returned to her, so she turns to the screen, selects the first tab that fell to show a larger list, and chose the very first of those.

The screen changed showing a grayscale title card.

Now Playing

Deku? Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Let it begin
{On screen}

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Hope and Heartbreak

{Even after an hour-long shower, Izuku still felt the weight of the past 24 hours clinging to his skin. All Might looked down on him from every wall in his room, judgmental eyes staring straight into his soul.}

A murmur cuts through the theater. "I love All Might why would I be so upset?" Izuku pounders aloud.

"What did you do to Problem Child?" Aizawa leans toward the towering blond.

"How am I supposed to know what another me did?" All Might counters.

Aizawa huffs and turns back toward the screen.

{*'You can't be a hero*

Not without a quirk

Be realistic'

Izuku went to bed crying for his broken dream.}

"Does this mean the golden boy of 1-A was born quirkless in this world? How awful that must be, can you imagine?" Monama began to

gloat.

Midoriya started to get nervous "Y-yeah, can't i-image that." The green bean stared pointedly at the screen. 'Will they figure it out?' he couldn't help but think.

{His room looked empty without all his All Might merch.

It wasn't that Izuku hated All Might now, it's just that every time he looked at the smiling hero, all he could think was you can't be a hero. Just because Izuku was finally coming to terms with that fact didn't mean he needed it playing on a loop in his head every time he's at home. He still had a few posters up from some of his other favorite heroes, but he'd changed his sheets to a plain black set that he'd found collecting dust in the linen closet paired with a gold pillowcase. It wasn't official merchandise, but it reminded Izuku of Eraserhead anyway.}

"He knew who you were?" Midnight was certainly surprised.

"That's right, the first day of school he did call me Eraserhead before I could introduce myself."

"And you've never brought this up before because..."

"Honestly?" She nods. " I forgot"

"Really!?" Many teachers echo the sentiment.

{It had taken a few days for him to gather the courage, but Izuku had finally sat down and updated his hero analysis notebooks, leaving out the parts on All Might's secret weakness. It was… oddly comforting. He had thought it would be painful and it was in some ways, but it was mostly familiar, like his analysis was the only part of himself that hadn't shattered alongside his hero dream. That was why he found himself, during his latest bout with insomnia, browsing a lesser-known hero forum. He'd found it several years earlier and quickly figured out that a lot of underground heroes used it to communicate with each other, since it offered encrypted chats and accounts were only known by random numbers, rather than usernames. He'd spent about two weeks back then figuring out which accounts corresponded to which heroes, but he had never posted himself. As Izuku drowsily scrolled through old posts, a crazy idea occurred to him. If he couldn't be a hero himself, why couldn't he help the real heroes

be better?}

"You really can't keep yourself from helping others." Todoroki says to which Iida adds "An admirable trait for any hero in training."

"Unless I make things worse or bother someone."

" Oh, please Deku you're the most helpful person I've ever met. Bakugo is probably the only person that could get annoyed with you." Ururaka comes in.

"Thank you" Izuku whispers.

{ In the morning, he'd blame it on sleep deprivation and then promptly die of mortification, but that didn't change the fact that, at two o'clock in the morning, Izuku Midoriya sent ten underground heroes in-depth analyses of their quirks and fighting styles.}

"Trust the nerd to think those stalkers' notebooks could ever be useful." Bakugo grumbled.

"Come on Bakubro, Midobro has always been smart of course he'll be useful" Kirishima corrects.

"Dude, what's your problem with him anyway?" Sero adds.

"NONE OF YOUR DAMN BUSINESS!"

"Easy bro we're just curious.," Kaminari replies.

{New Message

12579: (Eraserhead)

Thank you for the analysis. It was eye-opening to see my strengths and weaknesses from an outside perspective, not to mention the ideas for improvement.}

"Don't you usually hate analysts?" Ms. Joke pops in.

"Typically," Aizawa responds curtly, eyeing her warily. "I didn't realize you were here."

"Heck if I know why, but this is prime cuddle time don't you think?"

A dry "no" is all she gets before laughing loudly.

Meanwhile...

"He thanked me?" Izuku seems dumbstruck at the thought.

"How long have you been doing your analysis?" Tsu asks.

"I started when I was 4."

"No one does anything for more than ten years and is bad at it." The rest of the Dekusquad add their agreements.

{Izuku was hyperventilating. Eraserhead, the Eraserhead, had thanked him for his analysis. The Eraserhead! It almost made up for the Kachaan and his lackeys beating him up again during lunch.}

" Geez, Bakugo I knew you were an ass but that's some bully shit." Kaminari spoke up.

"Relax Kamibro, is not like this is our world." Kirishima defends, wondering why Bakugo is suddenly so quiet.

{Not quite, because the bullying had gotten worse since the sludge villain incident, but it came close!}

"The sludge incident?" Present Mic wonders. "Wasn't there a sludge villain Bakugo was attacked by?"

"Yes," Aizawa replies "and this puts his relationship with the Problem Child in a whole new perspective."

{Several other heroes had also sent him messages thanking him, while others, who had heard of his analyses from their friends, had asked him to send them theirs.}

"Highly illogical without a way to verify identity."

{He was just finishing up verifying the identities of those who had requested analyses (to make sure he wasn't accidentally helping any villains)}

"You were saying?" Midnight teases as Aizawa pointlessly ignores her.

{when he saw a blinking notification in the bottom left corner of

his screen.

New Message

12579: (Eraserhead)

Do you analyze villains?}

The screen returns to the chapter select screen as the different groups discuss what they saw.

(Teachers/Pros)

"Does the little listener analyze in our world?" Present Mic asks the group.

"He does carry that beat-up notebook with him everywhere." Midnight points out.

" There's a number on the front, but I can't remember which." Aizawa admits.

"13" All Might chimes in. "I believe the other 12 are filled to the brim, though I haven't seen them. I gather Young Midoriya was ridiculed for what's in them, so I never pushed and would ask that you do the same."

"A shame really; I would have liked to see them." Nedzu admits.

"Well if you're lucky this little viewing party will make him eager to share." Hawks buts in.

"I just want to know why we're here." Mirko huffs.

"We're top Pro Heroes we'll obviously be part of the story." Endeavor grumbles. Everyone readily agrees.

(Dekusquad)

"He asked for help..." Izuku seems blown away " ... from me."

"Of course, Deku, you're really smart and always help us strategize."

"She's right Midoriya, kero."

"Even if your plans are a little crazy."

"I agree." Iida adds "You truly embody U.A.'s Plus Ultra attitude."

" You guys." Izuku chokes out through happy tears.

The screen switches stories as Headcase loads the first chapter. "Everyone ready?" Everybody settles and looks at the screen. " Alright then."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Edited: April 21st, 2022

Mastermind chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Another begining

Chapter Notes

{ on screen}

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

Temptation

{Izuku Midoriya tried to like heroes. He really did. That was difficult, however, when it had only been a month since the number one hero himself had crushed Izuku's dreams like a stale cracker, and then simply watched as Kacchan was attacked. Izuku wondered what would have happened if Death Arms hadn't prevented him from running in at the last minute. Maybe he would have impressed All Might, who would have taken him on, and taught him how to be a hero. Izuku scoffed at his own thoughts. Him, a quirkless loser, impress All Might? Yeah right.}

"This version seems rather bitter doesn't he?" Iida posits.

"Wouldn't you if the number one hero himself shattered your dreams!?" Ochako snaps.

"It was just an observation Ururaka, he didn't mean anything by it." Midoriya defends.

"And he's not wrong." Todoroki adds.

{As it was, All Might had gotten his act together eventually and Kacchan had been alright, if unconscious when he was retrieved from the sludge villain's body, and Izuku had spent the last month quietly selling off his All Might merchandise and harboring a growing resentment toward hero society. Which is what led him to where he was now, sitting at a sketchy internet cafe, about to tell a random internet acquaintance, who in all probability might be a villain, how to kill a minor hero. }

"Oh, this is going to be good." Dabi grins rubbing his hands together.

"Don't get too excited." Twice spoke, "This is going to be epic!"

"As if golden boy really would." Shigiraki barks.

"But the light cutie said there were worlds where he's one of the baddies, so maybe this is one of them." Toga exclaimed. The villain boys returned to the screen with great interest.

{He had found the post on one of the more underground hero forums, the kind that often included posts about vigilantes and villains alongside the heroes. Izuku didn't necessarily want to be on it, but he was holding onto a hope that if he just continued doing the things he enjoyed before everything went to shit then he might eventually start feeling a spark of something besides anger. The post itself hadn't been that long, just one question:

Whyher0es301:

Completely hypothetically, how would one go about killing Mt. Lady?}

"Is he gonna answer it?" Ashido asks.

"As if the nerd would ever go against any hero." Bakugo huffed.

"I don't know man he seems kinda bitter."

"Come on Serobro, let's give him the benefit of the doubt." Kirishima defended.

{A simple post like that shouldn't have changed his life. Izuku should have just ignored it, or maybe told the police, especially after he read through the user's old post and discovered that, even if they weren't a villain, they were a villain sympathizer. He should have not given it a second thought and turned to more reputable forums to try and dig himself out of his growing depression.

Instead, he did none of that.}

"Oh no, Deku, please no." Ururaka begs.

"I would never." Midoriya gasps "please."

"It's alright Midoriya, that isn't you, not really." Todoroki comforts.

"Indeed, Headcase asked us not to hold the actions of another world against those of our own, which I assume includes the person taking said action." Iida observes.

"You aren't doing this, he is." Tsu states clearly.

> {For the next week, the question repeated in Izuku's mind like a broken record, his mind latching onto anything that could cut through his apathy. How would one go about killing Mt. Lady? She was a new hero, prideful, and media-hungry, which might explain why she was one of the hero world's rising stars, but Izuku knew she had weaknesses. He found himself at more and more of her fights over the next week, trying and failing to convince himself that he was there because he liked Mt. Lady, not because he was analyzing her weaknesses. It had only taken him three days to realize that his hero analysis books contained enough information on heroes' weaknesses that he could probably kill any hero he wanted to, with a little work. The thought made him sick, but it still didn't stop him from seeking out Mt. Lady's fights and it didn't stop his brain from obsessing over how to kill her.}

"I am no longer excited to be here." Mt. Lady speaks up. Most can't help but agree.

> {It would be laughably easy, Izuku realized, to use her love of the media against her. Pretend to be a reporter, lure her into a densely populated area with narrow streets to prevent her from using her quirk, ask for a selfie and stab her through the heart while her eyes were focused on the camera, then blend into the crowd before anyone realized she was dead. He tried to leave it at that. He knew how to kill her, so he really didn't need to be thinking about it anymore. After the week he'd had, he really should have expected that putting the issue out of his mind wouldn't work. Anyway, it was all hypothetical, right? What was the harm in private messaging the poster and describing his plan, as well as a few backups, just in case? After all, it wasn't as if the poster was a villain, just a villain sympathizer. Mt. Lady probably wouldn't end up dead. And Izuku could make a dummy account at an internet cafe just in case so that no one could track his IP address, and then he'd never have to use the account again and maybe he'd be able to finally stop thinking about this. }

"When we return remind me to make some counter strategies for these plans." Nedzu says to the group.

{A little over an hour after walking into the internet cafe, Izuku signed out of the account he'd made, M4sterM1nd404, and walked out the front door feeling oddly relieved.

Izuku Midoriya tried to like heroes.

It didn't work.}

"A dog with a bone that one. I wonder if we could..." Dabi begins.

"Don't bother!" Shigiraki snaps "Golden Boy over there is sickeningly heroic."

Meanwhile...

"So he chose the name Mastermind." Todoroki observes.

"Todoroki no." Midoriya whines.

"Todoroki yes." The stoic boy deadpans as the rest of the Dekusquad hold back their laughter.

{Izuku's life went about surprisingly unchanged after his brief descent into maybe villainy. There had been several times since then when he found himself on a verge of a panic attack, wondering what he could have been thinking, sending off his notes like that. Every time he managed to calm himself down by justifying that the person he messaged probably just thought he was some creep for taking his post seriously. The poster hadn't even expected a response, he was just venting frustration, probably, so nothing was going to come of it. He wondered, in those moments, if he was a bad person for feeling sad about that fact. He knew he was.}

"That's rather concerning." Midnight murmurs.

"That's an understatement." Aizawa grumbles back.

{It had been eight days since Izuku had messaged the poster and he had just finished bandaging himself up from Kacchan's latest attempt to put him in his place. The beatings had become even worse since the sludge villain incident. From what Izuku could gather from Kacchan's rants between his explosions, he was trying

to prove he wasn't some weak-ass victim or something like that. The result was that Izuku spent most of his life nowadays alone and in pain, but how was that any different from every day since he turned four?}

"Geez Bakugo, would you really be that much worse if Midoriya was quirkless in our world?" Kaminari asks.

"Just shut up and watch the screen." Bakugo dodges.

{Izuku was just tugging his shirt down to hide the bandages as he left the bathroom when he heard his mother gasp and drop a pan in the next room. He ran in to find her staring open-mouthed at the TV, the news anchor standing on what was normally a busy street, the shot backlit by flashing police sirens.

"...As of yet, police have few leads on the identity of the attacker, only saying that he might have some sort of stealth quirk considering how quickly he was able to disappear in the aftermath of Mt. Lady's death this afternoon. A vigil for the fallen hero will be held…"}

Quit murmurs spread through the theater, mourning the fall of one of the kindest people most had ever met. (Midoriya, not Mt. Lady) Though the villains are very excited about what's to come.

{"Isn't that terrible, Izuku! She was such a new hero too. Who would do something like this…" His mother turned back into the kitchen, trying to distract herself by preparing dinner. Izuku simply stared at the TV in shock, not really seeing anything. The poster had been serious after all. He had actually done it. This meant that he, Izuku Midoriya, a hero fanboy, was now an accessory to a hero's murder. Izuku's started to hyperventilate only to be violently knocked out of his upcoming panic attack by another thought. Mt. Lady was dead. That meant that he, a quirkless Deku, had beaten a hero. An unfamiliar warm feeling welled up in his chest and he fought down a smile. He wondered if this made him a bad person.

He knew it did.}

The screen returns to the chapter select menu as the different groups discuss what they just saw.

(Villains)

"Don't get excited," Shigiraki warns "one 'accessory to murder' charge doesn't make someone a hardcore villain."

"But there's a chance." Twice counters "No way in hell!"

"I wonder when the other me gets to meet him." Toga cheers.

"Settle down and maybe we'll find out." Dabi complains.

(Teachers/Pros)

"While I'm quite happy that this is not what we have to face, I feel it only right to remind you all of the statistics surrounding the quirkless." The principle begins. "You see while the world itself is maybe 20% quirkless here in Japan..." The poor Pros become trapped with their teaching coworkers in one of Nedzu's infamous lectures.

(Dekusquad)

"I can't believe any version of me would do something like that." Izuku says softly, as though he's disappointed in himself.

"Well, you don't know what it's like to be quirkless so that changes things right?" Ururaka remarks.

"Right!" Midoriya exclaims a little too quickly, which his friends choose to let go.

As the theater settles and everyone turns back to the screen the entity begins the next chapter.

Now Playing

Viridian Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Loopholes

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Technicalities

{Toshinori glanced down at the boy as rain fell all around them. Yes, the boy had a heroic spirit, but just being near the power of one of Toshinori's full-strength punches was enough to practically knock him out. If he were to have that power inside him...his body wouldn't be able to handle it, he'd break! Giving a weak body so much power would be irresponsible, no matter how strong his spirit was. Besides, Toshinori's power was running out, he needed a strong successor. The boy would be able to find other ways to help people.}

The different groups try to decipher the meaning behind All Might's thoughts, turning to the blond sitting in the theater to be met with "How am I supposed to know what another me is thinking?" So everyone turns back to the screen.

{"You're just a quirkless failure that wouldn't even cut it as a rent-a-cop Deku!" Kacchan screamed. "You didn't help me! You did nothing! I don't owe you anything! You got that?"

Izuku nodded fearfully as Kacchan stalked off. He was right, Izuku really hadn't done anything except get in the way. But at least he'd tried. It had been...weirdly exhilarating, that one moment of risking his life for someone else before giving up on his dreams forever.}

"Problem Child, are you an adrenaline junkie?" Aizawa calls out.

"I honestly don't know sensei."

"Wonderful" Aizawa grumbles.

"It would explain some things." Mic points out.

"I think he knows that." Midnight whispers.

{'If you wanna be a hero so bad, take a swan dive off the roof and pray you'll be born with a quirk in the next life.'}

"Damn Bakugo, it's like you're getting progressively worse in each world" Sero comments as the others agree.

"Whatever, idiots." Bakugo huffs.

{Izuku shook his head. No, Kacchan was just being mean, Izuku didn't actually want to die, right? That's not why he'd run in to stop that villain. The rush was just because he'd deluded himself into thinking he was helping Kacchan.}

"Oh, the poor thing." Ururaka whispers.

"I hope he doesn't do anything rash." Todoroki insists.

"To be fair, that's kind of Midoriya's M.O., kero."

"I hate to be negative, but Midoriya can be rather impulsive." Iida reluctantly agrees.

"Sorry." Izuku says softly, which the squad insists is part of his charm. So he smiles softly.

{And there were plenty of other ways to help people, just like All Might had said. He could become a policeman!}

"That's a decent backup plan." Midnight remarks.

{'*You wouldn't even cut it as a rent-a-cop.*'

No, it would probably be best to do some research when he got home. There had to be other people out there that realized they couldn't be heroes, right? Maybe he could do some digging online and find out what careers they went into.}

"So much for the backup plan." Midnight grumbles.

"Indeed, though the instinct to research when uncertain is the mark of an intelligent individual." Nedzu pipes up.

{He walked into the apartment and was immediately almost knocked off his feet as his mom ran to hug him, “Oh, Izuku, baby! I was so worried! What were you thinking?”

“I guess I wasn’t.” Izuku chuckled. “Sorry, Mom.”

After finally convincing his crying mother that he was, in fact, alive and well, he took a shower and then sat down with his laptop to look into alternate careers. The question now was what to type into the search engine.}

"That can be difficult to decide." Iida comments.

{'What to do when you can’t be a hero.'

The search algorithm must be designed to search for any word in the entered phrase because the top results were all interview clips from various pro-heroes giving the ‘*anyone can be a hero speech*’. Lies. Halfway down the page, however, Izuku finally saw a result that looked halfway like what he was actually searching for.}

"Mood" Kaminari adds.

"And what exactly do you research dunce face?" Bakugo snaps.

"Do you really want to know?"

"FUCK NO!"

"Then don't ask." It took a while for Kirishima to calm bakugo down after that.

{He clicked on the link and it took him to a thread on one of the hero forums. A user a few years ago had asked, “I just took the exams for several different hero courses and didn’t get in. Being a hero was all I ever wanted to do, so what should I do now that it isn’t an option.”

Well, Izuku hadn’t quite gotten to the point of actually taking the UA entrance exam, but the rest applied pretty well. He scrolled through the various answers. A lot of them just offered condolences and told the asker to talk to the career counselor at their school. Izuku didn’t think that’d help him much though,

considering that when he'd met with his school counselor last year, the woman had told him to consider being a garbage man. Not that that wasn't a completely valid career, but he knew she only suggested it because he was quirkless. }

"What a bitch." Jirou calls out.

"That language is unbecoming of..." Iida begins.

"Excuse me, Iida," Headcase speaks up "while normally you would be right to correct your classmates' choice of speech, I, as the entity who rules this space, allow a reasonable amount of swearing. Still, I would like to thank you for being so considerate."

"Very well, I'll try to remember that"

{Izuku wanted a job where he could actually help people. Hmmm, a few people suggested being a doctor, but Izuku didn't think he was smart enough for that. His classmates were always telling him that he was a stupid Deku, after all. A policeman might be a good option, but then again, Kaachan was probably right. If he didn't have what it took to be a hero, why would he have what it took to be a cop? He was just about to close the browser and go to bed when a comment with a large thread caught his eye.

Well, if you didn't get into the hero course, you can always be a vigilante.}

"Problem Child, please, just no." Aizawa gripes.

{Most of the replies to that were exactly what Izuku suspected they'd be, basically bullying the commentator for suggesting something so obviously illegal. Izuku shouldn't even be thinking about this, he was in enough trouble for running into the situation earlier but...wait? Wasn't that vigilantism too? They probably let him off easy because he's a kid and it was obviously the first time he'd done something like that. But that thrill of almost dying to save someone else…

Izuku opened another tab. It wouldn't hurt to do some more research on vigilantes, right? The more he learned, the more he'd understand that this was a completely stupid idea that he absolutely should not do. It was obviously stupidly dangerous and had a very good chance of killing him!

Right?}

"Maybe he'll talk himself out of it." Ochako says hopefully.

"I should hope so. Vigilantism is a terrible crime to commit." Iida informs, to which both Midoriya and Todoroki give him a look. He promptly turns back the screen.

{There wasn't a whole lot of information on particular vigilantes, at least not as much as there was on the legal heroes. Heroism was often based on fame, but apparently, most vigilantes didn't get very popular. But popularity wasn't very important to Izuku, he didn't really need to be popular to be happy. Fame was for people like Kacchan who deserved it.}

"Poor thing thinks so little of himself. Who could possibly say that someone who tells you to kill yourself deserves to be a hero?" Midnight wonders aloud. Many can't help but wonder the same.

{Then, around midnight, Izuku read a research paper about a group a few years ago called the Nuruhata Vigilantes. It was by a college student who apparently hadn't gone on to do any more serious research, but it did give a decent overview of vigilantism in general and how illegal heroes were seen by the general population.

'According to the Japanese government, Vigilantism is defined as using one's quirk in an unauthorized act of heroism. The vigilantes of Nuruhata definitely fit the bill, but do people see them as evil, like the government proclaims, or as good….'

Izuku read the first sentence a total of five times before looking up the actual law. At least according to the government, quirkless people couldn't technically be vigilantes...wait, he couldn't be a vigilante!}

"IS THAT A THING?" No one's quite sure who asked as everyone turns toward the teachers and Pros.

"Allow me to check." Tsukauchi pulls out his phone and pulls up the laws relating to vigilantes. Everyone holds their breath. "As it turns out, that is correct." A murmur rolls through the room as everyone turns back toward the screen.

{Izuku didn't end up getting any sleep that night, since by the time he'd finished reading all the various laws on self-defense and

quirk usage, the sun was already rising. He should still probably find some way to conceal his identity since he didn't want to make his mother worry, but...well, there was no law preventing him from risking his life to help people.}

The screen fades to the chapter menu.

(Teachers/Pros)

"Why aren't I surprised with Young Midoriya taking the path of a vigilante?" All Might speaks up.

"Because he seems to live for saving others, we are quite lucky to get to teach someone so driven." Nedzu chirps.

"Can't wait to see what's coming up." That's Amplifier putting in her 2 cents.

"That's the third 'chapter 1' we've seen, one more to go." Aizawa reminds.

(Dekusquad)

"If there a reason you 2 have Iida a look when he condemned vigilantism, kero?"

"Oh, nothing." Todoroki says as Midoriya spits out "Don't worry about it." The girls eye them warily but ultimately decide not to push.

As the theater settles and everyone turns to the screen, the next chapter loads.

Now Playing

Cheat Code Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

The final begining

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

The Death of a Dream

{Izuku numbly watched the door shut behind All Might. Kacchan had been right, he really couldn't be a hero. Izuku felt the tears prickling at the corners of his eyes and looked around. If he went home right now, Mom would hear him crying in his room and wonder what was wrong, and Izuku didn't really feel up to explaining himself right then. This rooftop, however, was completely deserted. Making his decision, he sat down and hugged his knees to his chest as he let himself break down.}

"So now we get to see what would happen if he chose, not just to accept All Might's words, but to process them properly as well." Hound Dog growls.

{He should have known that would be All Might's answer. He had studied quirks for years, so he of all people should know that a quirkless teenager had no chance of beating villains with strong quirks. He couldn't even beat Kacchan! He should have seen this coming, so why did it still hurt so much?}

"Because you've dedicated your life to that!" Ururaka shouts at the screen.

{After a few minutes of this, he became vaguely aware of the sounds of fireworks in the distance and almost stood up to look before changing his mind and curling up even tighter as he sobbed harder. The fireworks would probably look pretty and might even cheer him up a little bit, but Izuku wasn't really in the

mood for pretty things. No matter how cool they looked, fireworks wouldn't be able to put his shattered dream back together. }

"THOSE AIN'T SOME DAMN FIREWORKS!" Bakugo shouts.

"Is this the slime thing again?" Kaminari asks.

"Fucking obviously!" Bakugo snaps.

{The explosions were a good background for his pity party though, Izuku thought with a wet chuckle. It was almost like the world itself was celebrating that he'd finally come to terms with reality. He couldn't really tell if he was sobbing or laughing at the mental image of Kacchan and his teachers in party hats, gathering around a cake with All Might's true form on it as they set off confetti poppers. Congratulations!}

"Humour found in darkness is often its only reprieve." Tokoyami rumbles.

{He was definitely laughing now. Kacchan would totally have a disgruntled expression on his face at being forced into a party hat, but Auntie Mistuki would probably just hit him on the head if he tried to take it off. Mom would be the one to cut the cake, and she'd look proud and relieved as she gave him the first piece and told him to be sure to pick something safe for his next dream. }

Many can't help but chuckle at the image on the screen. However, Aizawa asks aloud "Does his mother support his heroics career?" To which the teachers and Pros begin to argue.

"I can answer that." All Might speaks up. " While she readily admits she would prefer Young Midoriya choose a safer path, she makes great effort to calm her worries for his sake."

{Izuku took a deep breath and stood up, wiping the last of his tears from his cheeks. There was still a dull ache in his chest, and he still didn't know what he was supposed to do now, but...well, it probably wasn't the best coping mechanism, but he felt like his imaginary pity party was almost like a funeral for his aspirations of being a hero. Wait, was this feeling, grief? That would make sense, but it seemed weird to feel grief for something that wasn't a person. His dream was kind of like a pet, right? He'd cared for it for years and refused to let go, and now it was gone, so it was probably okay to be a little sad.}

"He's actually processing very well so far." Hound Dog insists.

{The sun had set sometime during his breakdown, so Izuku hurried straight home, only pausing once to check his reflection in a shop window to make sure his eyes weren't too red. He ran up the stairs to his apartment and quickly took off his shoes before digging in his backpack for his hero analysis notebook. Between the sludge villain and the koi pond, he was lucky that it was legible at all. He should put it in the freezer to save it so he could transfer his notes into another book, then he could carefully take out the pages that All Might had signed and frame them!}

"He crushes your dream and still you worship him!" Shigiraki gripes at the screen.

{"I'm home!" He called out as he walked toward the kitchen. He should put the notebook in a plastic bag before putting it in the freezer so it didn't get anything gross on the food...

His thoughts were interrupted by his mom running at him so fast that she slid across the kitchen floor and almost knocked him down with the force of her hug, "Oh Izuku! I was so worried about you!"}

"That's odd," Midoriya says "I usually get home late."

{Izuku looked at the clock. He wasn't that much later than he normally was. He knew for a fact he'd gotten home much later because he'd lost track of time watching hero fights, so why was Mom so worried today? She couldn't know what All Might had told him yet, could she?}

"Really Problem Child, how could she possibly know that?" Aizawa grumbles.

{Mom was still talking, rambling in her worry, "I saw about Katsuki on the news and I know that you take that route home sometimes, and I couldn't see you and you weren't answering your phone and I was just imagining what would have happened if the villain had grabbed you instead because Katsuki was barely fighting him off with his explosions and…"

Izuku went cold, "What?! What happened to Kacchan?!"

Mom froze, "Y-you didn't know?"}

"Oh, the slime incident again?" Midnight wonders aloud.

"Indeed," Nedzu chirps "it would seem this event is a commonality between these stories."

{Izuku shook his head frantically and stared at her with wide eyes. Mom pressed her lips together in worry, then led him into the living room and unmuted the TV. There was a young reporter on the screen, backlit against a few still-burning fires as Backdraft and a few other heroes lingered in the background.

"...the sludge villain seemed to be intent on suffocating his victim. Thankfully, the heroes on the scene were able to keep the others in the area safe until the arrival of All Might, who defeated the villain and saved the hostage, as expected of the number one hero. The sludge villain has now been taken into custody by police, while the hostage and several bystanders were taken to the hospital for various injuries…"

"They had to take him to the hospital?" Izuku fretted. "Is he going to be ok?"}

"Deku, your too nice." Ururaka insists.

"What do you mean?"

"The other you is showing concern for his bully," Todoroki begins "and we have no doubt you'd do the same."

"It's not a bad thing, kero."

"Indeed, an admirable trait in a hero-in-training."

"Thanks, guys!" Izuku beams.

{Thankfully, Mom nodded quickly, "Mitsuki said he won't even have to stay the night. The only reason they took him at all was because he apparently passed out for a minute or two before All Might got to him, but he's going to be ok!"

Izuku sighed in relief. He wasn't sure what he'd do if Kacchan had been hurt or died. It would have been his fault for distracting All Might and making him use up all his time, and Izuku wasn't sure if he'd be able to deal with that, especially since the description of the villain sounded like the one All Might had saved Izuku from, which meant that Izuku distracting him probably allowed

the villain to escape. It was a good thing he'd already held the funeral for his dream because there was no way he was capable of being a hero if he let villains escape like that. But Kacchan was ok, All Might saved him.}

"Don't be relieved your damn bully is okay! Be happy karma came for his ass!" Dabi comments.

{Oh no! Was All Might ok? Izuku quickly excused himself and ran to his computer to look up footage of the fight. All Might didn't look tired, but then again, he didn't look like a skeleton either, so Izuku knew he was good at hiding things. He almost melted in relief when All Might jumped away without talking to a single reporter as soon as Kacchan was safe. He was already past his limit when he talked to Izuku, and he'd probably had to go beyond that to save Kacchan, but that didn't mean he had to force himself to stay and chat. Hopefully, he was at home taking a well-deserved nap.}

"What a sweetheart." Midnight squeals.

"We are lucky to have met him, aren't we?" All Might smiles softly. The other teachers can't help but agree.

{Izuku spent the rest of the night studying the fight. The sludge villain was a lot less impressive when he wasn't drowning in it,}

Many murmurs consider this Midoriya being attacked first and what that means for the story as a whole.

{but apparently, the heroes on the scene before All MIght got there didn't agree, because they seemed at a loss for what to do. Izuku pulled out a new notebook and started analyzing. While it made sense for Backdraft to fight the fires, it would have been better to prioritize the rescue and have him dilute the villain enough for him to let go of Kacchan. It would have meant leaving the fires burning, but since there were more fires the longer Kacchan was held hostage, it would have been better in the long run.}

"Why didn't I think of that?" Backdraft complains.

{Mt. Lady could have helped with evacuation, especially if Backdraft was busy taking care of the villain. Her height prevented her from getting into the narrow street where the fight was, but it was wide enough that she could have reached her arm

in and let people climb onto it from the upper windows. And if she could reach her arm in, it might even have been possible for her to grab Kacchan from the villain without ever stepping into the street, depending on how far down the street they were.}

"Well, when you put it like that..." Mt. Lady says slightly embarrassed.

{Kamui Woods and Death Arms were more difficult, but if Kamui had looped around to come at the villain from behind, he might have been able to grab Kacchan without getting in range of his hands. Death Arms could easily have helped with the evacuation.}

"Doesn't U.A. offer refresher courses?" Kamui asks aloud.

"I'll make preparations for a strategy course when we return." Nedzu replies "I expect you each to attend." They all quickly agree.

{Eventually, Mom confiscated his notebook and forced him to go to bed, but Izuku's head still kept him awake for another hour going through all the possibilities of how that fight could have gone differently. Finally, his thoughts slowed down enough for him to slowly drift off to sleep with one last coherent thought:

'Is there a way to help heroes work smarter?'}

The screen returns to the chapter select as everyone talks about the stories so far. Comparing, predicting, and voicing concerns. As the room settles the screen begins to load.

Now Playing

Deku? Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

What's in a name?

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He’s Some Pro…

Deku

{Private Chat}

"Chat fic!" Ashido and Kaminari cheer.

{58726: (Ms. Joke)

So… does anyone know who our mystery analyst actually is?}

"Guess that's why I'm here." Ms. Joke chimes.

{87657: (Mr. Brave)

Does anyone know who any of us are? We’re called underground heroes for a reason…}

"And me." Mr. Brave adds.

{58726: (Ms. Joke)

Point taken.

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

It is a valid question though. He came out of nowhere, how do we know he’s not a villain giving us false information in order to defeat us?}

"It looks like Marai features in this story." All Might observes.

{58726: (Ms. Joke)

How do you know it’s a he?

12579: (Eraserhead)

So far, all the information he’s given me has been accurate and no villains have known information about me that they shouldn’t. Besides, if he was a villain, I think we would have already been targeted, considering he could have easily beaten any one of us using the information in the analyses he sent us. As strange as the situation is, I think he really is trustworthy, but only time will tell.}

"That's high praise from you, Sho." Mic mentions.

Meanwhile...

"My notes can't be that good." Izuku mumbles.

"In one of these worlds you basically planned an assassination," Todoroki insists "and it was very successful."

"I guess."Midoriya grumbles.

{58726: (Ms. Joke)

It’s possible he’s a pro who’s new on the scene.}

"They think I'm a pro!" Izuku exclaims.

{87657: (Mr. Brave)

With that level of analysis? More likely he’s some veteran deigning to impart his infinite wisdom on the younger generation. He’s had an account on this site for years, I checked, but he’s never posted before now.}

"They think you're a veteran pro!" Ururaka enthuses.

{58726: (Ms. Joke)

Maybe it’s Nedzu?}

"Probably the first place I checked." Aizawa mentions.

{12579: (Eraserhead)

No, I already asked him if he was behind it. I'm leaning more toward a retired pro.}

"You know yourself so well." Midnight teases.

{72598: (Sir Nighteye)

What are we even supposed to call him? If he's a hero, what's his codename?

87657: (Mr. Brave)

Yeah, typing out Mystery Analyst every time is gonna get old real quick.

12579: (Eraserhead)

Well, there's only one logical way to find out.}

"How's that?" Mic asks.

"I don't know, maybe ask him." Aizawa deadpans.

{It had been a little over a week since Izuku had impulsively started sending his analyses to pro heroes and he had quickly fallen into a new routine. Go to school, hide from Kachaan at lunch, more school, run from Kachaan after class, maybe catch a villain fight on the way home, do homework, eat dinner, complete analysis requests from the hero underground, and go to bed. Most of the time, heroes simply wanted an analysis for themselves, but a handful had started sending him videos of villains in action for him to analyze.}

"Aside from the dodging of bullies, it's a wonderful schedule." Nedzu compliments.

{Today, Izuku logged into his account hesitantly, with Kachaan's most recent jeers still echoing in his ears. It had been a bad day and Izuku had failed at both hiding and running, resulting in

twice as many beatings. Why had he ever even thought he could be useful to actual heroes when he was just a weak, useless, worthless, quirkless Deku?}

"For someone to feel that way the bullying would need to be severe and consistent." Hound Dog comments.

{Izuku shook his head and opened his inbox to find a new message from Eraserhead.

New Message

12579: (Eraserhead)

By the way, what's your codename?}

"When you want information it's best to be direct." Aizawa insists.

{Kachaan's voice echoed in Izuku's mind

Useless

Worthless

Deku

DEKU

DEKU

Private Chat

12579: (Eraserhead)

His name is Deku}

The screen fades.

"Why didn't you tell me it was that bad!?" Ururaka exclaims. "If I had known..."

"Ururaka please calm down!" Izuku raises his voice to be heard. "You changed the meaning of that name and for that, I'll always be grateful."

"Do you mean that Problem Child?" Aizawa calls down.

"Yes sensei," he replies "my friends have taken something I've hated, and turned it into something I can't see myself without."

"Is that the only reason you chose that name?" Midnight adds.

"No," he answers "but I rather not say the other reasons yet."

"Alright then."

As everyone settles once again the next chapter begins to load.

Now Playing

Mastermind chapter 2

Chapter Summary

It's villainy the career for me?

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

Hope for the Future

{Despite his best efforts, Izuku found himself at an internet cafe logging into his Mastermind account a little under two weeks after Mt. Lady’s death.}

"So much for 'one accessory to murder' huh, Dusty." Dabi snarks.

"Just because he's going to the account doesn't mean he'll do it again." Shigiraki warns.

{The TV in the corner is playing the news and even now won’t stop talking about the murder. There’s even talk about putting a memorial up where she was killed.}

"Hon, you've been unusually quiet, you doing alright?" Midnight addresses Mt. Lady.

"I don't know. I mean..." she begins, everyone remains quiet to give her time "... I'm dead, in that world at least, I don't know how to feel."

"Yeah," Kamui adds "even though we don't always get along I consider us friends."

"It's only natural." Hound Dog informs "Any death can be traumatic, much less your own." The others are quick to offer words of comfort and understanding.

"You know each of us could find ourselves in her situation if this story

goes the way we think it will." Aizawa warns. At that, the group becomes slightly more solemn.

{Every time he hears about it, he feels a weird mixture of pride and nausea, the same feeling he felt every time he considered logging into his account.}

"He's getting into it!" Toga cheers.

"Don't hold your breath." Shigiraki denies it.

{He knew that he should just let it lie, but recent events had shown how not great he was at that. Once his brain had latched onto a problem, it wouldn't rest until it was dead. Literally, in the case of Mt. Lady.}

A few snorts of unknown origin echo throughout the room.

{He clicked on the little envelope at the top of the screen, seeing a notification for four new messages. He opened the oldest one first, the only one from the original Mt. Lady poster.

New Message:

From Whyher0es301

Thanks for the plan, I couldn't have done it without you. Well, I couldn't have gotten away with it at least. I know your reasons for helping are your own, mine are too, but just know that if you ever need anything, I've got your back.}

"He's already had a success," Tsukauchi states. "Hopefully we'll catch him quickly." The group as a whole is quick to agree.

{Well, Izuku thought, that's nice of him at least. He sat back and took a deep breath. No one had ever thanked him before, well, not including his mom. Goodness knows Kacchan never did. It felt...really good if Izuku was being honest with himself, even if it was coming from a murderer.}

"Is validation all it takes?" Izuku wonders sadly.

"Well, he doesn't have us to tell him how great he is." Ururaka

reminds.

"I'm not that great." He denies it.

"You're kind."

"Determined"

"Studious"

"Guys!" Izuku whines embarrassed by the attention, but the Dekusquad just keeps going.

{The thought made Izuku nauseous again. Just how desperate was he for attention if a compliment from a villain was enough to send him over the moon? He really was as pathetic as Kaccan was always saying, wasn't he? Izuku shook his head in an attempt to yank himself out of a self-pity spiral. If he let that get going, he might be there for hours and he really didn't want to stay logged in on his villain account longer than necessary. (He pointedly ignored the voice in the back of his head that said having a villain account wasn't supposed to be necessary at all.) It was then that he noticed the thank you note had a postscript.

P.S. I hope you don't mind that I told a few friends about your account. None of them are cops, so don't worry about any snitches.}

"Oh great," Aizawa says "recommendations."

{Izuku hurriedly clicked back to his inbox, trying not to panic. He refreshed the page twice, willing the words on the screen to change, but when had anything ever actually paid attention to what he wanted? Three new messages. From villains. It wasn't like Izuku could justify it like he could last time by saying he didn't know for certain these were villains. They had been referred to him by a murderer specifically because he had apparently made a murder plan. There was no way they weren't villains. This was terrible! What had he gotten himself into?}

A quiet chant of "do it, do it, do it." can be heard from the villains' section.

{"Hey kid, are you ok?"

Izuku jumped when the teenager who had been running the counter put a hand on his shoulder. He hadn't even realized he'd been hyperventilating until that moment. He nodded, willing the worker to just go away, but apparently he wasn't that great of an actor because the worker just stood there looking concerned. Izuku took a few deep breaths, both to calm himself down and to convince the worker he'd be fine. When he felt he'd staved off the panic attack he met the worker's eyes.

"Thank you for your concern. I think I'll actually be heading home now."

The worker nodded and walked back to the counter as Izuku signed out without reading the other messages.}

"Let's hope he leaves it at that." Mic prays.

{He considered deleting the account, but the worker was still eyeing him with concern, so Izuku didn't want to take too long. He almost sighed in relief when he walked through the doors. No doubt if the worker had seen anything incriminating on his screen, he would have called the cops rather than helping Izuku through a panic attack. He pulled at his hood self-consciously as he turned toward home. Someone thought he was useful. The thought almost stopped him in his tracks, but he managed to trip over the air instead. Someone thought he was useful. Sure, that someone was a villain, but still, someone thought he was useful! That meant he wasn't just a worthless Deku!}

"This is depressing." Kaminari complains.

"Way to state the obvious." Jirou snarks.

{Bad Izuku, he shook his head. As great as that compliment felt, it was still coming from a villain, a murderer, and murder was wrong. Izuku reminded himself that this was a world he didn't want to be caught up in and he didn't want to associate with murderers, despite the fact that they seemed to be the only ones that didn't see him as a waste of space. Murder is wrong! Izuku didn't want to be a villain

He just had to keep reminding himself of that.}

"He doesn't sound convinced." Midnight points out.

"Take note students," Nedzu addresses the room "villains are rarely

ever born, but usually created." The students took a moment to digest this lesson.

{Izuku kept his head down as he walked to his seat at the back of the classroom, mentally willing himself to become invisible. Kacchan had been quiet for a few days, which normally meant that an explosion was coming. He was so concerned with not meeting Kachhan's eye that he didn't notice the foot sticking out in the aisle until he was already going down. As it was, he knocked his chin hard on one of the desks and just barely avoided biting his tongue as the class roared with laughter.

"Midoriya," The teacher called out. Izuku felt his hope rise, was the teacher actually going to step in and put an end to the bullying? He had to have seen that guy trip him, right? "If you're quite finished being a disruption, I am ready to begin the lesson."}

"What kind of sorry excuse of a teacher is that!?" Aizawa barks.

"Midoriya." Nedzu calls out.

"Yes, Principal Nedzu?"

"What is the name of your middle school?"

"Aldera, sir."

"Thank you." Nedzu chirps with a gleam in his eye causing the other teachers to shiver.

{Izuku looked up at the teacher from his place on the floor, shocked. The teacher saw what had happened and was still turning a blind eye? Izuku sat shocked for a few silent seconds before looking down at the floor and nodding. He could already feel blood beginning to drip down his neck from where his chin hit the desk, but it was obvious that he wouldn't be going to the nurse's office today if his teacher's initial reaction was anything to go by, so he just grabbed a handkerchief from his bag and held it to stop the bleeding as he hurriedly found his seat as the teacher began to talk.}

"He's really not going to the nurse?" Sero asks.

"Hey Bakubro, was your school really like that?" Kirishima turns to the

blond.

"Those extras didn't give a shit about anything." Bakugo states.

"Did..." Kaminari hesitates "Did you ever have to deal with that?"

"As if I'd ever be that much of a klutz." The Bakusquad isn't sure how to take that.

{“So, everyone, I know that everyone has already decided what high school they want to go to and that most of you are headed for heroics. However, due to the highly competitive nature of that field, we’re obligated to dedicate time to a career planning workshop to make sure you know about other career paths that could be available to you. Take one of these worksheets and pass the rest back. You’ll have the whole period to work on them, so just raise your hand if you have any questions. Try to keep in mind your quirks, skills, and talents when weighing your options.”

Most of the students started to move around as soon as they received their worksheets, going to sit by their friends, and the noise level gradually increased as everyone started up side conversations. Izuku turned his attention to the paper and started trying to think of careers that didn’t involve heroics. After all, if even All Might didn’t think it was possible…

“Oi, Deku!”}

"Why can't he just leave other you alone?" Ururaka whines.

"That's just how he is." Izuku relents.

{Izuku tensed at Kacchan’s tone, what now?

“So,” He could tell by the smirk on Kacchan’s face that whatever he was about to say wasn’t going to be pretty, but doubted he could do any worse than the suicide baiting that had become almost common since the sludge villain incident, “Teach said we were supposed to pick careers based on our quirks, skills, and talents, but you don’t have any of those, so what can you even do? A quirkless Deku like you is so useless you’ll be lucky to be hired to take out the trash.” The lackeys surrounding him laughed and Kacchan looked at Deku with a self-satisfied smile as if he had just told the greatest joke of all time, but then again, Izuku thought bitterly, everything Kacchan does is the greatest.}

A murmur of discontent rolls through the theater.

{Izuku tried to ignore the jibe and just do his worksheet, but Kacchan's words, unfortunately, got him thinking and he pulled out his phone to google jobs for quirkless people. The results loaded slowly, thanks to the school's cheap internet, but they were no less shocking when they finally appeared.

Quirkless Unemployment, an Epidemic?

Quirkless Discrimination, Fact, Fiction, and Glass Ceilings

Quirkless Unemployment: Statistics

Izuku skimmed through the articles, frantically at first, then with more and more numbness as the hour went by. Of all the quirkless people who lived to adulthood, which was only about half since suicide rates were so high, almost 80% were unemployed. Of the lucky 20% that managed to find jobs, almost all were making minimum wage and the exceptions were mostly older professionals who had been hired and promoted back when quirklessness was more common. If someone had asked Izuku that morning what would be more harmful, a throw-away insult in homeroom or the beating that Kacchan gave him after school, he would have said the beating, hands down. In actuality though, he barely felt the explosions and hardly remembered patching his wounds after.}

"He's learning the hard way just how cruel the world really is." Dabi mumbles.

{The fact that quirkless unemployment was the first result when looking up statistics on the quirkless was rather telling. But that couldn't apply to Izuku, right? After all, Izuku was smart, capable, and determined (he tried to avoid thinking back to the three unread messages sitting in his villain inbox), he wouldn't have a problem finding a job if he really put his mind to it. He wouldn't just be another statistic, living on the streets just because of something he was born without...right?}

"Why do I get the feeling he's going to be sorely disappointed?" Midnight asks.

"Maybe because you've been paying attention for once." Aizawa deadpans.

"Hey!"

{Charging to kill heroes would pay the bills at least. Izuku tried to shake the unwelcome thought from his mind as he washed up for dinner, but it stuck there like a stubborn piece of gum. After all, on the internet, no one knew he was quirkless and his skills obviously spoke for themselves. Yeah, he might have to worry about avoiding the police, but he could bypass the invisible walls that kept the quirkless in their place, as Kacchan would say.}

"Damn, that explosion kid is a Grade A asshole." Dabi comments.

"Which is why he'd make a great villain." Shigiraki states.

"We already tried to recruit him, and failed." Twice reminds "Let's try again!"

{No! bad Izuku! He tried to calm down by having a staring contest with himself in the bathroom mirror, then went out and joined his mother at the table. Murder is wrong ... right?}

"Right, don't go down that road." Ururaka calls out.

{No! Izuku wouldn’t become just another statistic! And he wouldn’t let himself become a villain either (despite how tempting that might be). But what should he do?

“You’re awfully quiet tonight, sweetie”

Izuku was startled out of his thoughts. His mother was looking at him with concern and pity in her eyes (he was so sick of pity), practically begging him to tell her what was wrong (he couldn’t do that, she wouldn’t understand.) But what could he tell her?

He smiled as an idea occurred to him.

“I want to try and get a job,” he blurted out.}

A few students shout out encouragement towards the screen, hoping, praying he finds one.

{Mom’s eyes widened slightly at first, but then her face relaxed with relief. She’d probably thought it was something a whole lot worse (if only she knew).

“I think that’s wonderful sweetie! What brought this on?” She smiled.

“We had a career day at school and I thought it would be helpful to get some experience to help me decide,” Izuku lied easily, and wow, wasn’t that concerning?}

"It is." Aizawa deadpans.

{“Just let me know if there’s anything I can do to help you,” his mom teared up, “I’m so proud of you Izuku!”}

"Your mom seems very nice, kero."

"Yeah, she's the best." Midoriya admits softly.

{After a few more tears, Izuku finally finished dinner and went to his room to start on his plan. This was his chance. If he could find a job despite being quirkless, then that would mean that the statistics were wrong and there was hope for his future. If he could get a job, then he really had no reason to turn to villainy, right? As Izuku researched job openings and began filling out online applications, he made a deal with himself: If he got a job, he would delete his Mastermind account, and if he didn’t? Well… he’d cross that bridge when he got to it.}

The screen fades and the theater remained silent until Ashido remarks "Well that was ominous." Followed by a chorus of agreements in the vain of "no shit"s and "you don't say"s.

As the room settles, the screen begins to play the next chapter.

Now Playing

Viridian Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Who needs a day job?

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian:The Green Guide

First Day of the Rest of my Life

{When Izuku arrived at school the next day, his classmates had already heard both about Kacchan's invitation to jump off a roof and Izuku's idiotic run-in with the sludge villain and they had apparently decided that the two must be related.

"Hey loser, there are easier ways to kill yourself…"

"He was just being an attention hog. Can you imagine wanting to die on live tv?"}

"Those little shits!" Ururaka blurts out.

"As much as dislike your choice of language I have to agree." Iida intones.

"Thank goodness that didn't happen in this world." Izuku mumbles.

"What was that?" Todoroki asks. The whole squad turns to Midoriya.

"Oh! Uh, nothing!" Izuku exclaims "At least nothing you need to worry about."

"If you say so, kero."

{Izuku ignored them. He didn't want to kill himself, that was stupid and would break his mother's heart. Not to mention that if

he killed himself, Kacchan would get in trouble for suicide baiting him.}

"That's what your worried about!?" Dabi questions loudly.

{There were a lot of reasons why the teachers didn't bother reporting Kacchan for his...more explosive tendencies, but one of them was that if Kacchan's treatment of him were discovered, he might not be able to go to UA and Izuku wouldn't be able to live with himself if he was the reason Kacchan didn't become a hero. Well, he wouldn't be living at all in that hypothetical situation, would he? Whatever, it was still the same concept.}

"Oh, the poor bean." Midnight says.

"Bean?" Aizawa questions.

"Green bean." Midnight informs as though that explains anything.

{If he were to die doing vigilante stuff, on the other hand…}

"It sounds like he's making plans." Ashido whispers.

"He better fucking not!" Bakugo barks.

"Easy bro," Sero comforts "that's a different world, it's not like you actually told him to kill himself."

"Right." Bakugo says quietly. "Obviously, I didn't."

{Izuku shook his head. He really shouldn't be thinking about stuff like that, it wasn't normal. He sat down at his desk and sighed at the flower someone had put on it. Apparently, there had been some sort of unspoken barrier against telling Izuku to kill himself but now that Kacchan had blown that barrier up, the other students were more than happy to follow his lead.}

"Bakugo's qualities as a leader could have been disastrous." Hound Dog comments.

"And they will be," Aizawa adds "for the villains."

{Izuku glanced over toward Kacchan, who was very determinedly not looking at Izuku. No, Izuku should stop thinking everything was about him. Kacchan just thought that the view out the window was much more interesting to look at than a worthless Deku like him and he was right. Izuku grabbed the flower and

went to throw it away amidst a chorus of giggles and whispers from his classmates. He could handle this, it really wasn't that much worse than it had been and Izuku was used to insults and threats. Why should this new evolution be any different?}

"Revelry in the dark." Tokoyami whispers.

"I'd have to agree." Shoji replies.

{Izuku had been wrong. Suicide baiting was different than what he'd been through before. A few days ago, he definitely suspected that most people would be happy if he died, but now he knew it. Was living even worth it anymore? Maybe it would be easier...but Izuku still couldn't be responsible for getting Kacchan in trouble or making his mom feel guilty. He frowned as he started to walk home. Being quirkless sucked.}

"How uncouth," Momo says "harassing someone for something they can't control! Animals all of them!"

"Seriously what's wrong with people!" Hagakure blurts out.

{Maybe he should go out and do some vigilante stuff later? When he'd researched it last night, he'd originally planned on waiting a few months to go out so he could get in shape and maybe get some fight training, but after the day he'd just had...well, he wasn't going to go intentionally put himself in danger, he was just going out to get the lay of the land, right?}

"Problem Child, don't get yourself hurt on night one." Aizawa bristles.

{He took a detour to a nearby shopping center on the way home, since he didn't really have anything appropriate to wear for technically legal crime fighting.}

"Gotta love loopholes." No one is sure who said that.

{His mom would be so worried if he somehow got a cold because he didn't dress warmly enough before going out all night, so he couldn't just wear one of his t-shirts.}

"Your going out to pick fights with villains and your worried about catching a cold?" Ojirou asks the screen.

{The problem was that all his jackets and hoodies were hero

merch, not that there was anything wrong with wearing hero merch, but there'd been another vigilante, the Crawler, who wore an All-Might hoodie. Izuku didn't want people thinking that he was the Crawler because what if that guy got in trouble for what he did? Besides, it wasn't very polite to steal someone else's signature look.}

"Ah yes," Shigiraki snarks "copyrights and all that."

{He ended up buying a dark green hoodie. It was thick enough that it would keep him warm and the dark color would be good to help him blend into the shadows. Black would probably be better, but the store was out of black and he was left to choose between green or navy, so he figured he may as well match his hair.}

"Oui," Aoyama pipes up "matching ones outfit to their natural coloration is tre magnific."

{There was a costume store next door to the department store he'd bought the hoodie at, so he decided he'd walk around and see what he could find to hide his identity. After looking at probably way too many different kinds of masks, he groaned in frustration. The simplest option would be to choose a simple domino mask, but one good punch and it'd be flying off his face. Not to mention that it might slide around and impair his field of vision, which wouldn't be safe at all. He was about to leave when he walked past a display of different goggles. That might be useful if someone tried to throw dirt in his eyes or something, right?

The only problem was that he'd be going out at night. The goggles would need to be tinted to hide his face, but then they'd darken his field of vision. Izuku frowned, then noticed a sticker on one of the brands.

Quirk enhanced, won't color your vision!

That would work.}

"Him getting things that could be found anywhere is going to make him hard to track." Tsukauchi informs.

"And the Problem Child isn't even doing it on purpose," Aizawa gripes "it's just convenient."

{Izuku tried on a pair and sure enough, even though he should be

seeing everything in hot pink, the world looked completely normal. He shook his head a few times to see if they were secure. Alright, so the goggles weren't just going to fall off like a mask would. But did he really want them in pink?

He ended up getting the goggles in dark green to match the hoodie and his hair. It was much simpler to have everything match rather than try to worry about accent colors and everything. And it's not like Izuku actually cared about what his vigilante alter-ego looked like. He just wanted to help people. If he were going to be an actual hero, stuff like looks would be really important, but...he didn't think he even deserved to look like a hero. So, Izuku really didn't need his vigilante outfit to be anything special, he just needed it to be practical.}

"Another thing to make him hard to track." Midnight adds.

{The guy at the checkout had a unicorn quirk, which Izuku thought was pretty cool. Did he just have the horn or were there other aspects of his quirk? Could he run faster than the average person? How did the horn affect…}

"DAMNIT NERD," Bakugo shouts at the screen " PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOUR DOING!"

{"Hey kid, are you actually gonna buy that, or are you just gonna stand there?"

"O-oh, um, s-sorry." Izuku put the goggles down on the counter and the guy scanned them.

"Nice goggles, kid. You making a cosplay?"

"Umm…" Planning out his vigilante outfit was kinda like making a cosplay, right? "Y-yep!"}

"Wow Deku," Ururaka teases "so convincing." Izuku responds by glowing bright red.

{The cashier nodded, "Cool. That's where most of our sales come from, you know? But, by the way, if you're going for Hawks, we do have yellow goggles in the same brand."

"Um, no thank you. It's, uh, for something else."

The guy shrugged, "Gotta admit, I don't know all the heroes, but

good luck with your cosplay. Hope it turns out ok.”

Izuku nodded, “T-thank you. Have a nice day.”}

"That cashier was such a cutie," Toga exclaims "I wonder how much better he'd be covered in blood?"

"When we get back home you can figure that out." Dabi smirks.

{When Izuku got home, he hid the bags in the back of his closet and got to work on his homework, which was deceptively easy as usual. He always got through it too quickly, so he had to go back and second guess all his answers because his classmates, even Kacchan, took twice as long and there’s no way Izuku was smarter than them. So, yeah, doing his homework didn’t make him any less stressed.}

"He's right he's not smart." Todoroki deadpans.

"I know." Midoriya whispers.

The squad goes to comfort Izuku and admonish Todoroki, who quickly but evenly says "Your brilliant." Making the others beam.

{Mom called him for dinner right as he finally finished. She kept glancing at him between bites like she was trying to check if he was ok. He didn’t know why she was so worried, he hadn’t had any negative effects from the villain attack last night, and it wasn’t likely he was going to be affected by it now. And Mom couldn’t be worried about the bullying because she thought it was a thing of the past. When Izuku was nine, he’d realized that the only one he was hurting by reporting his classmates was himself because he’d get detention for being a troublemaker, so he’d told Mom that it’d stopped and had taken up first aid as a hobby.}

"All Might." Aizawa turns to the blond.

"Yes, Aizawa?"

"As the person that knows Midoriya best," Aizawa begins."would he ever ask for help, from anyone?"

"I..." Small Might thinks for a moment. "I don't think he would." They stay quiet for a while. "Perhaps a few sessions with Hound Dog will help with that?"

"I'll add him to my schedule." Hound Dog interrupts. "Wait until we get home to approach him about it. This really isn't the place." Both readily agree.

{So if it wasn't the villain attack and it wasn't the bullying, what was she so worried about?

"You're quiet tonight, Izuku." Mom said finally. "Is everything ok?"

Oh, so she was worried because he wasn't talking, that made sense. But he couldn't tell her about the vigilante thing, she'd be so worried!

"Yeah, Mom, all good!" He smiled. "It was just a long day at school, so I'm pretty tired."

Mom frowned, "Those teachers aren't overworking you, are they?"

"No, they're just trying to get us ready for high school and you know how much work that takes."

"Oh, well that's a relief." Mom smiled. "So, have you given any more thought to what high school you want to go to? I know you've had your heart set on UA…"

'Can you be a hero? Not without a quirk.'

Izuku gave a strained smile, "I-i'm not really sure anymore. Don't get me wrong, UA is a great school, it's just...I'm not sure it's realistic."}

"No, Midobro, you could have made it."

{Inko got a look on her face that was halfway between relief and pity, like she wasn't sure how she was supposed to feel. Izuku could relate. He finished his food and stood to take his dishes to the sink, "Thank you for the food Mom, I think I'm going to go to bed early tonight."

"Ok, baby." Inko stood to give him a hug, "Just...know that I'll support you, whatever you decide. Ok?"

Izuku smiled for real this time, "That means a lot, Mom. I love you."

“I love you too, baby.”}

"D'aww that's so wholesome!" Ashido exclaims.

"I know right!" Kaminari adds.

"Mama Midoriya, Momdoriya, Momidoriya..." Kirishima ponders.

"Mamadoriya" Sero suggests.

"That's it! She's so sweet"

"Would you idiots shut up!"

"In a sec Bakubro"

{Izuku woke up to his alarm at one a.m. and quickly silenced his phone. Mom was a deep sleeper, but that still didn’t mean he could be as loud as he wanted without waking her up. He used the light from his phone and rifled through his closet until he found the hoodie and mask he’d just bought, then quickly pulled on an old pair of black jeans that had gotten ripped when Kacchan pushed him down the stairs last month and a black long-sleeved shirt. He put on the hoodie, but held the goggles in his hand for a long moment before finally just stuffing them in the hoodie pocket.

Even though he was technically going out as a vigilante, he wasn’t actually planning on stopping any crimes tonight. Sure, Izuku’s neighborhood wasn’t the best, but there were always heroes patrolling during the day, so there shouldn’t be too much crime at night either, right? Even if there was, Izuku didn’t actually have to get involved. He just wanted to go out and figure out what the streets were like at night. They were bound to look different than they did during the day and if Izuku was actually planning on being a vigilante long term, it’d be best if he didn’t get lost just because it was dark.}

"At least the little listener's being smart about it." Mic comforts.

{Izuku slipped on his shoes and made sure they were tied tightly before slipping out the front door and locking it behind him. Then he started to wander. Without the goggles, he just looked like a normal, if slightly idiotic, teen on a midnight walk. He figured he could always slip the goggles on if he ran into any trouble, but

until then they would just look suspicious.

The city looked strange at night. During the day, the streets were crowded and Izuku was constantly being distracted by the sheer variety of quirks he saw, but at night, the streets were practically deserted. Most of the people he saw were either homeless or drunk or both, but they weren't really harming anyone, so Izuku didn't need to get involved. He made mental notes of where the darkest alleys were or where the street lamps were burned out so that he could disappear quickly into the dark if he needed to, but there didn't seem to be any danger yet.}

"Seeing his observational mind at work is quite exciting." Nedzu chirps.

{Izuku had been walking for twenty minutes and was starting to wonder if he'd even run into any crime tonight when he heard it.

"This can't be all you've got on you! What kinda guy doesn't even carry a cell phone?"

"I-i swear, that's all I have!"

Izuku ran to the mouth of an alley and saw a group of three large thugs ganging up on a smaller teen. He grabbed his goggles from his hoodie pocket and was about to run in when one of the thugs hit the brick wall with his fist and noticeably cracked it. Oh no, that guy was strong.}

"Okay, here's what you do," Mineta said to the screen "back away slowly and run."

"Coward!"

"Who said that!?"

{Izuku ducked behind a dumpster and tried to calm his breathing. There was no way he could fight guys like them! He didn't even have enough muscle to keep Kacchan from beating him up! If he ran in there right now, he'd die! And just because Izuku was kinda apathetic about the whole death thing at the moment didn't mean he was ready to walk into certain death. Especially when that death was almost guaranteed to be extremely painful.}

"Whatever keeps you alive, I guess." Shigiraki says sarcastically.

{But Izuku couldn't just do nothing! The kid was probably really scared, and he was starting to plead with the thugs, so Izuku couldn't just leave him. He needed to be saved. But...Izuku couldn't do that, could he? He really was a useless deku wasn't he? What was he even good at?

'You can't do anything, Deku.' Kacchan had said a couple weeks ago. Well, he said that all the time, but that was the particular instance that came to mind. 'The only thing you're good at is running away.'}

"You've gotta be fucking kidding me." Bakugo mumbles in disbelief.

{Izuku froze. He was good at running away! Most of the time when Kacchan beat him up, it was because Izuku was trying to defend someone else,}

"I can see that happening." Satou comments.

{but if he was going after Izuku himself, he was usually able to run fast enough to avoid a beating. Izuku stood and ran, unnoticed by the thugs or their victim.

It was a crazy plan and might very well get him caught on his first day as a vigilante, but he had to try.}

"Problem Child, what are you planning?" Aizawa sounds at this Midoriya.

"Well if I had to guess.."

"Ah, ah, ah." The blue light interrupts "no spoilers." To which Aizawa grumbles.

{Izuku peeked around the corner and sure enough, Amplifier was talking to a fan.}

"Oh, I'm in this one." Amplifier cheers.

{He'd spent so much time watching hero fights over the years that he practically had every hero's patrol route memorized, but he'd never thought it would come in handy for anything besides taking notes.}

"Did you really do this?" Todoroki asks.

Izuku answers a little red faced. "Yeah?"

"An impressive feat to be sure." Iida compliments.

{Still, there were only a few heroes that were active at night, but Amplifier was one of them, mostly because she fit well into the bar and nightlife scene and was able to control most of the drunks. She was also the closest to the mugging Izuku had witnessed.

Making sure his goggles were secure and his hood was up, Izuku grabbed a medium sized rock and chucked it at Amplifier, wincing when it hit her on the arm. He hoped he hadn't hurt her.}

"I just threw a rock at a hero."

"No Deku, he did, you didn't."

{"What? Who did that?"

Izuku waited until Amplifier saw him, then gave her a shaky smile so that she knew his attack had been intentional. Then he ran.}

"That little brat!" Amplifier laughs.

{"Hey! Kid, get back here!"

He glanced behind him and smiled in triumph when he saw that she was following him. He didn't really know how fast Amplifier could run, but she had to be in shape if she was a pro. Izuku sped up both so that they could get to the mugging faster and so that she wouldn't catch him. The alley was just around the next corner…

"Kid! Stop!"

"Help!"

"Shut up!"}

"Not a bad plan." Mic compliments.

"Don't encourage him." Aizawa warns.

{Izuku ducked into a doorway and watched as Amplifier looked

torn. On the one hand, she wanted to go after the punk kid that had thrown a rock at her, but on the other, the kid being mugged was obviously in more immediate danger. She cursed then ran into the alley to stop the mugging.}

"Can you imagine how annoyed you be?" Ashido asks.

"I think 'frustrated' would be a better word from it." Sero replies.

{Izuku smiled, ran over to one of the buildings bordering the alley and started climbing the fire escape. Yeah, it probably wasn't very vigilante-like to stay and watch the fight, but...well, it wasn't like he was actually a vigilante anyway, right?}

"Typical" Bakugo snorts while giggles surround him.

{Izuku ended up watching the entire fight from the roof. His fingers twitched and he decided that he'd have to add a portable notebook to his vigilante outfit. Amplifier's quirk was better for evacuation, since her voice quirk was all volume and very little power, but she was able to imitate some of Present Mic's moves here since it was a small space and her opponents were in very close range. Mostly though, she used some form of mixed martial arts to take down the thugs.

Hmm...Izuku stood and started imitating some of her moves to get them down in his brain. If he ever wanted to actually fight anyone, it'd be good to have at least some ideas of what to do, even if he didn't actually have any formal training. He'd have to set aside some time to practice every day if he wanted to get better, but well...watch and learn, right?}

"That kid of yours is a quick study Toshinori." Gran Torino says "That version is gonna be very effective." All Might smiles.

{Izuku smiled as Amplifier finished fighting the last thug and went to comfort the victim. He'd done it! He'd saved that kid! Well, he hadn't actually done it, but he'd led Amplifier to the fight! After the thugs had all been subdued, Izuku climbed back down to the street and ran off to find another crime to stop.

He may not be as strong as Kacchan, but he could still save people by playing to his strengths. And what was a useless deku like him good at?

Running away!}

The screen fades as people scatter for more food, coffee, and to use the bathrooms as others theorized about what's to come. As the theater settles once again the screen begins to play...

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

> Friendly reminder that Headcase told the cast not to hold the actions of those of the other worlds against their counterparts in this world. Most don't know Izuku was born quirkless in their world, and those who do can't call out Bakugo's bullying or All Might's stupidity without exposing One for All. That being said, please have patience, I do have plans.

Cheat Code Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Career day

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Cheat Cose: Support Strategist

A New Dream

{Let's do something at school…

"Alright students, remember that your finalized high school application plans need to be turned in to the guidance counselor by the end of the week." The teacher said boredly. "So if you want to make any changes, they need to be done by then."

The bell rang and Izuku hurried to put the away rest of his books and get out of the room before Kacchan could corner him. Things had been kinda weird since the sludge villain incident a few days ago and it seemed like Kacchan was constantly two seconds away from exploding, even more so than he usually was, at least. It probably had something to do with the fact that he had to be saved, and he was probably thinking that their classmates were looking down on him for being weak, so Izuku just thought it would be smarter to avoid him until things calmed down a little bit.}

"That's not a healthy mindset." Hound Dog mentions.

"You do anger management courses, right." Aizawa states.

"I'll add him to them."

{Unfortunately, Kacchan had other plans.}

"LEAVE HIM ALONE GOD DAMNIT!" Ururaka aims at the screen.

{Izuku had barely managed to get out the front gates of the school when he found himself being slammed into the wall. He coughed as he struggled to catch his breath again, clutching his backpack to his chest so Kacchan couldn't steal it. He had just finished transferring all his hero analysis notes into a fresh notebook, he couldn't let it get destroyed again!

"You heard what Teach said." Kacchan scowled as he held Izuku against the wall. "It's your last chance to change your fucking mind about going to UA, you damn nerd. You'd better take it because there's no chance a worthless nobody like you is ever gonna be a hero!"}

Shouts of 'he could have' and 'back off' ring out.

{"I know…" Izuku muttered.

Kacchan froze, "What did you just say?"

Izuku took a deep breath, "I said I know, Kacchan. I can't even defend myself from villains, how could I ever hope to defend other people? You were right, I'm never going to be a hero."}

"Bro, you good?" Kirishima asks.

Bakugo turns to him with a sad frown as opposed to an angry one. "I don't know what I'd do if he actually gave up."

{Izuku took advantage of the short moment Kacchan stood there gaping like a fish to pull out of his grip and run down the street, blinking away his tears. It was one thing admitting the truth to himself, but it was another thing entirely to say it to Kacchan like that. It made it more real, somehow, and even though the pain was a lot less than it had been when All Might first gave him a reality check, it still hurt.}

"Can we go to the other worlds?" Hagakure posits. "Asking for a friend."

The glowing entity answers with an unamused frown "No."

{And now everyone would know. It wouldn't take long for Kacchan to rant about it to his lackeys, and from there it would spread like wildfire, and soon enough, the entire school would know that Izuku Midoriya had finally given up on his dream of being a hero. It would be too late to change his mind. But then

again, wasn't it too late already? It had been too late ever since he turned four.}

Silent disagreements leave the room solemn.

{He was running out of time to find his new dream. Their high school plans were due in just a few days, but Izuku didn't know what he was supposed to write. He'd always wanted to go to UA because it was the best heroics school in Japan, but now he knew that he couldn't be a hero, it put everything into question. Maybe he should go to a different high school since he didn't need to go to a school with a hero course anymore, but he still thought it would be cool to go to UA. It was where All Might had gone! He could just go into general studies...or maybe one of the other courses would be better?}

"Our school's other courses are just as competitive as the hero course." Nedzu states. "No matter which he chooses, it will take him far."

"Signing up for other schools is only logical." Aizawa affirms.

{Izuku ran a hand through his curls, wincing as his fingers caught in the tangles, and sighed. He needed to do a little more research before he made a decision. He sat down at his computer as soon as he got home and pulled up UA's website, navigating to the application page. He'd never actually read through the information about all the different courses since he'd been too fixated on the hero course, but better late than never, right?

Thankfully, there was a page on UA's website explaining each of the different courses and how to apply. Izuku started off by reading about general studies, obviously, since that was most likely where he'd end up. It seemed pretty standard, honestly. They would teach him the basic subjects, but Izuku didn't know how to feel about the fact that it didn't have any particular focus. General studies would look good on his resume, but that seemed to be all it would do for him. He didn't want to get bored.}

"Mood" slips from many people.

{Izuku bit his lip and clicked on the business course. There seemed to be a lot of money management involved in that one, which didn't really appeal to him. The heroic analytics classes sounded slightly better, but they mostly approached things from a marketing standpoint, rather than focusing on quirks like Izuku did. He decided to put a pin in that one. If he didn't find anything

better, business might be a decent option, but it wasn't going to be his first choice.

He almost just closed his browser instead of reading the page on the support course. He wasn't an engineer. He didn't have any experience in mechanics or fixing things and while he found the way support items interacted with quirks interesting, he wasn't really interested in making them. But he'd looked through all the other courses, so he may as well glance at support if only to complete the set.}

"Can you imagine," Powerloader asks " me getting your 'Problem Child'?" He did use air quotes.

"Oh, you poor fool," Aizawa grins "you just jinxed it." To which Powerloader swallows nervously.

{At first, the support course looked exactly like what Izuku expected. There were pictures of students standing with their inventions and groups of kids with grease-covered cheeks smiling at the camera, a wide variety of power tools, and other things he couldn't name in the background. Try as he might, Izuku just couldn't see himself there, but then he noticed the different tracks.

The business course obviously had different areas of emphasis, like marketing or economics, but Izuku had just assumed that support was like heroics or general studies, where all the students were grouped together and had similar goals. But about halfway down the support course information page, there was an explanation of different tracks within the support course.

The first was Invention, which the website said was obviously the most popular option. It focused on being able to create and maintain support items, specifically for heroes. Izuku had just kinda assumed that was what the entire support course did. What else could there be? Support items for civilians? But, UA was a hero school…

He scrolled past the Invention track down to the next option. Design. It focused entirely on the aesthetics of hero costumes, something that Izuku hadn't even thought about as being part of support. It was a decently popular emphasis, and the students worked frequently with the business school to make sure they were designing looks that could sell and with the Invention track

to make sure any support items visually matched the rest of the hero's costume. Izuku didn't think he was really artistic enough to enjoy that, though.

That brought him to the final track, which almost seemed like it had been added to the list as an afterthought. Intelligence and Analytics. Unlike the other two tracks, there weren't any pictures advertising that emphasis, and it didn't seem like it was chosen very often, but as he read the short paragraph, Izuku gradually became so excited he could hardly breathe.}

"Oh, my!" Nedzu exclaimed.

"Oh, no." Powerloader whispered.

{'Students in the Intelligence and Analytics Track of UA's Support Course focus on quirk analysis and helping heroes improve their quirk control and skill. Students are trained in how to obtain useful information to help heroes and detectives track down and defeat villains, as well as how to use quirk analysis to pinpoint villains' weaknesses. Interested students also have the option of taking courses in strategy if desired.'}

"That seems perfect for you Deku." Ururaka says very excitedly.

{Izuku couldn't help but think of the heroes that stood on the sidelines and waited for All Might while Kacchan was being attacked by the sludge villain. If he joined the support course, he could share his strategies with them! He could help the heroes strategize better and use their quirks more intelligently to take down villains and protect people. It was too dangerous for a quirkless kid like him to be on the front lines, but that didn't mean he couldn't work behind the scenes to make sure the heroes had all the tools and information they needed so that they knew what to do! He could help the heroes work smarter!}

"He's gonna do it!" Mic whisper-shouts "He's actually gonna do it!"

{It was perfect! Izuku glanced over at his collection of Hero Analysis for the Future. All these years, he'd assumed that the future he was preparing for was his career as a hero, but maybe this whole time, he'd really been preparing for a career in hero support! His cheeks were starting to hurt from how widely he was smiling and he was vaguely aware of the fact that he was mumbling as his brain spun with plans and possibilities. He would have to work hard for the next ten months if he had any

chance of passing the entrance exam, but rather than being intimidated by the challenge, Izuku just felt invigorated. He grabbed a brand new notebook from his desk and wrote Support Course Preparation on the cover. Izuku Midoriya had found a new dream.

And this time, it was attainable.}

As the screen fades everyone becomes aware of the panic overtaking the teachers.

"God, please no."
"Lord, why have you forsaken me?"
"Not another one."
"Two of them, there's gonna be two of them."

"Sensei!" Midoriya calls "What's wrong?!"

"I'd love to tell you," Nedzu's smile sharpens "but I believe Headcase asked for no spoilers."

Grumbling as they turn back to the screen everyone was just a little more nervous.

Now Playing

Deku? Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

HE'S A CHILD!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Meeting the Pros

{"Mom, I'm going to meet up with some friends tonight! I don't know when I'll be home, but it'll probably be pretty late, so don't bother waiting up for me." Izuku yelled as he finished packing his laptop and tried to get his bright red shoes on the correct feet.}

"Isn't this the world where he's sending us analysis?" Mr. Brave asks.

"Oh yeah," Ms. Joke wonders "what's gonna happen when they find out he's a kid?"

{"Ok baby," His mom smiled with tears in her eyes, "I'm so glad you have friends, you've seemed so much happier lately. Tell them I said hi and invite them to dinner sometime, I want to meet these friends you're always talking about."

Izuku hummed noncommittally as his mom pulled him in for one last kiss on the cheek before he ran out the door.}

"We should plan weekend trips to meet each other's families." Ururaka suggests.

"My siblings would like that, kero."

"We'd have to wait for Endeavor to be on a mission."

"I'll call my brother to see when he's home as well."

"I bet my mom is gonna go overboard for you guys." Izuku beams.

{It had been almost seven months since Izuku had wormed his way into the underground hero community, but tonight would be the first time he would be meeting any of his friends in person. There was a massive drug ring they had been following for a while and a lot of heroes were coming together to take them down. They had even invited Izuku, well, Deku, to tag along and maybe even be onsite to help strategize when their plans inevitably went off the rails. He'd warned them that he wasn't really ready for combat, but there were enough other pros that they didn't think it'd be a problem. The raid itself wouldn't be happening for another few months anyway, but everyone involved was meeting tonight in a secure location so they could make sure they all work well together and start planning.}

"Waiting is always the worst part of planning a raid." Aizawa gripes.

{The meeting wasn't in an area Izuku was highly familiar with, but since he'd gotten involved with the underground, he'd spent a lot of time studying maps to create better location analyses and plans for the heroes he helped. So when he exited the train, he confidently followed the mental map he'd memorized before he left. The rundown apartment complex didn't look like much, but it was typical of the areas his friends worked in. He climbed the stairs to the second floor, found the correct apartment, and took a deep breath.

Then he knocked.}

"I know the types of places you undergrounds have your meetings," Mic begins "you lot better get the little listener home safe."

"If other me doesn't," Mr. Brave adds "I'll find a way to get to him."

"No, you won't." Headcase pops in.

"Jesus Christ!"
"What the fuck!?"
"When did you get here!?"
Headcase cackled.

{"We're just waiting for Deku, right?" Ms. Joke asked, lounging back in her chair and putting her feet up on the scuffed table. Fourteen other underground pro heroes plus Detective Tsukauchi have all gathered around in the dingy apartment, idly snacking on refreshments as they waited for the meeting to officially begin.}

"Your first appearance." All Might says to Tsukauchi.

"Let's hope it isn't a disaster."

{“He should be here soon,” Eraserhead replied flatly. There was a knock on the door, “And there he is now.”

Sir Nighteye rose and called through the door, “How were things in Tokyo?”

The group had chosen a question/answer password system to ensure that no uninvited guests crashed the party.}

"You think we could use these to get some info?" Toga whispers.

"I doubt they'll use them since, I don't know, they know we've seen them." Shigiraki snaps.

"Oh, right."

{Everyone inside waited with bated breath, prepared to attack or evade should the answer be incorrect.

“The weather was terrible, but the food was great.”

The heroes exchanged shocked glances. The password was correct, but the voice was that of a teenager, not an old man like they had been expecting. They waited one second longer, then Nighteye asked, “Who is this?”}

"They look so confused." Kaminari chuckles

"Wouldn't you?" Sero asks.

"Well yeah," Kaminari replies " but I'm me."

"True."

{“Deku?” It was stated as if it were a question and the person on the other side of the door was apparently young enough that his voice was still cracking. Nighteye looked to the others for confirmation and Shota shrugged, gesturing to open the door. May as well see where this leads.}

"Of course, my voice would crack at that exact moment." Izuku whines. The Dekusquad can only pat his back in comfort.

{The kid, because it was undeniably a kid, on the other side of the door was not what Shota was expecting. He was short and scrawny, with just hints of muscles starting to show on his arms, and his dark green hair looked as if he'd lost a battle trying to comb it. To complete the look of an innocent teenager, he was wearing jeans and a T-shirt with, Eraserhead squinted to read the writing, yep, that said pants. Deku was wearing a T-shirt that said pants on it.}

The audience bursts into laughter, some suppressed chuckles, others loud and boisterous. Shouts of 'does he really dress like that?' and 'I can give you some pointers' ring out as Izuku's face burns.

{It seemed that the rest of the heroes were just as shocked as Shota was because the whole ensemble sat there silently staring at the kid until he started to awkwardly shuffle his weight between his feet. Finally, Mr. Brave broke the silence.

" You're Deku?" The kid flinched and Shota sighed. Mr. Brave was more brasher than most heroes, but he did get the point across.}

"You're so confused." Ms. Joke laughs.

"So are you!" Mr. Brave counters.

"I know and it's amazing!"

{"Yes?" Again with answering as if it were a question. Every head turned to Detective Tsukauchi, who just nodded, confirming that the kid was telling the truth, but he looked just as shocked as everyone else. Everyone turned back to look at the kid, who apparently really was Deku, who was still standing awkwardly in front of the open door.

"I guess," Ms. Joke started slowly, "we were expecting someone...older?"}

"No shit!"
"You don't say!"
"Who'd a thunk it?"

{The kid just shrugged. Well, Shota thought, that's that. He sighed.

"Come in and let's get started. It's illogical for you to just stand there all night. And close the door behind you."

The kid nodded frantically and practically tripped over himself in his hurry to close the door and sit down. Just who was this kid?}

"A Problem Child." Aizawa answered. Midnight and Mic snort in response.

{“Well,” Detective Tsukauchi started, “now that we’re all here, I guess we can get started on the mission.”

“Wait” Ms. Joke leaned forward in her seat, “Most of us haven’t worked together before, so wouldn’t it be a good idea to get to know each other a little more before we get down to business?” 'Wouldn’t it be good to get to know Deku, our curiosity will distract us otherwise.' was implied.}

"She has a point." Ashido says.

{“Actually,” Deku spoke softly, “Most of you have worked together before, but only in groups of two or three, and no one here has worked with everyone else here with the exception of me and maybe the detective, but I don’t know if I count since I do most of my work virtually…” The kid seemed to realize that he was starting to mumble and shut his mouth in a tight line as if he were expecting to be scolded for it.}

"That's a concerning reaction." Midnight says.

"Does the little listener stop himself like that in our world?" Mic asks.

"It's usually Bakugo snapping at him that stops him." Aizawa remembers.

"When we return please keep an eye out for such behavior." Nedzu requests. The teachers are quick to agree.

{“Yeah,” Mr. Brave bit the bullet, “Despite the fact that we’ve all worked with you Deku, we don’t really know you. Seems kind of unfair when you know enough about each of us that you could probably kill us in our sleep if you wanted to.”}

"Tact, Brave," Aizawa warns " use it."

"Sorry."

"Why are you apologizing?" Joke asks.

"Because that's totally something I would just blurt without thinking."

{Deku's eyes widened and his arms started flailing, "I would never do that! And I really don't think I could anyway, my analysis isn't really all that special, anyone could do what I do."}

"Hardly." Gran huffs.

{Shota didn't agree with that, but he decided to let it lie. "I think Brave makes a good point. What hero school do you go to?" Because obviously, this kid is training to be a hero, considering he already helps them on a regular basis. Hopefully, Nezu would at least be polite when trying to steal him from wherever he was attending.}

"When have I ever been impolite?" Nedzu wonders aloud. No one dares to answer.

{"Um…I'm still in middle school, actually. I go to Aldera junior high. I don't know where I'll be going to high school yet, but I think I'm going to apply for U.A.'s general education department."

Well, at least Nezu wasn't going to burn any bridges, but…

"Why not the hero course?"

From the way the kid hunched his shoulders, Shota could tell he was trying to appear smaller than he was, which was already pretty darn small. Interesting.}

"Yes, Shota," Midnight teases "so interesting."

{"Despite how much I'd like to, I-I can't be a hero, I... " he took a deep breath, as if steeling his courage, "I'm quirkless"}

"That don't mean shit!" Ururaka shouts.

"Ururaka calm down."

"No Deku, even if you didn't have a quirk you would kick ass!"

"She's right, kero."

"You always do well in quirkless sparring." Todoroki insists.

"Not to mention your clearly effective analysis." Iida adds.

{The words seemed to echo in the small room despite the fact

that Deku hardly whispered them. How? He had to have an analysis quirk or at least one that altered his intelligence. He couldn't be quirkless, could he? Though it would make some of his behavior make a lot more sense…

"We brought some footage of known drug ring members for you to analyze, Deku," Apparently Tsukauchi didn't know how to deal with the metaphorical bomb Deku just dropped either, "If you're ready?"}

"At least someone's doing something other than gaping at the kid." Dabi snarks.

{The kid reached into the yellow backpack he'd brought with him and pulled out a standard notebook and a few pens before nodding. The detective turned on the small T.V. that had been set up at one end of the room and it started to play footage that a security camera had caught of the drug ring they were tracking. Almost instantly Deku started muttering while his pen started flying across the page.

"...obvious mutant-type quirk, most likely some kind of fish? No, aquatic mammal. No scales. Most likely can't breathe underwater, then, but probably still weak to fire quirks or dry environments, kind of like Gang Orca. Then some kind of darkness manipulation quirk, does it allow him to make solid objects or just shadows? Could it be used to make someone effectively blind? How bright does light have to be to cancel out the ability? Most effective to corner in an enclosed space with bright light, or with other allies to make him hesitant to completely black out the area…"}

"Wow, now that I can understand one of his mutter-storms it's really impressive." Midnight remarks.

"I wish I'd paid closer attention," All Might began "who knows how much farther he'd be by now?"

"All we can do now is give him the support he clearly deserves." Mic comforts.

{Deku kept analyzing while the heroes stared at him wide-eyed. Yeah, they'd all read Deku's analyses, but it was another thing entirely to see it in person. The video ended after about five minutes and the next one started playing automatically. Deku hardly paused in his mutter storm, just continuing his notes where he left off.}

"Once you get started it's hard to look away." Ururaka comments.

"Watching myself do this is kinda trippy." Izuku admits.

"Understandable." Todoroki deadpans

> {Shota pulled his eyes away from Deku when he saw movement in the corner of his eye. Ms. Joke was gesturing to him frantically, widening her eyes and lifting up strands of her long hair before pointing at Deku. Shota looked at her in confusion and she rolled her eyes. 'Use your quirk', she mouthed. Ah. If he had some kind of analysis quirk he didn't know about or was hiding for some reason, it might make sense. It wasn't that Shota didn't believe the kid was quirkless, Tsukauchi didn't call him out on it at least, but it couldn't hurt to have some additional confirmation. Making sure that Deku was still focused on the video and not looking at him, Shota activated his quirk. The rest of the heroes had already noticed the side conversation and were looking at the kid, waiting for any reaction to having his quirk canceled.}

"I wonder what that would feel like without a quirk." Kaminari remarks.

Ashido bounces up "Maybe we could track down a quirkless person to test it!"

"Or, just hear me out," Bakugo begins sarcastically " you could shut up and pay attention since, I don't know, THEY ARE LITERALLY ABOUT TO DO THAT!"

"Oh," they say sheepishly "right."

> {Deku didn't even seem to notice Shota's eyes on him, much less a sudden absence of his quirk. His mutter storm continued at the same pace as before and his pen didn't slow down. The kid didn't even stutter. It surprised Shota enough that he blinked and his hair fell in front of his face. The heroes traded glances and Shota could have sworn he saw Ms. Joke's mouth wow. He agreed full-heartedly with the sentiment.}

"SEE!"

"Okay, okay, we get it." Ashido replies.

"No need to rub it in." Kaminari whines.

{The police had only managed to scrounge up about a half hour of footage from the cartel, but that was enough to fill almost half of Deku's notebook. He put down his pencil and started massaging the stiffness out of his hand.}

"Mood." Izuku deadpans making Ururaka snort.

{"Ok, I think I have a good idea of what we're up against. This is a lot more footage than I usually have to work with, so that's nice."

"I'd never thought about that," Mr. Brave said, "I guess we all guessed you were older, so we weren't worried about how dangerous it must be for you to go out and supplement the videos we send. I am so sorry."

Deku looked confused, "What do you mean supplement?"

Sir Nighteye spoke this time, "You know, hitting the streets, finding the villains in the videos, and making your own observations. If I'd known Deku was a kid, I'd never have let you do that."}

"I wouldn't do that!" Midoriya panicked.

{Deku looked panicked and flailed his arms again, "I never do that! My mom would kill me and then ground me until I was 80! The videos you send me are usually more than enough, and sometimes I can manage to find some news footage, but I wouldn't dream of following these guys myself, I promise!"}

"Thank god for that." Aizawa seems relieved.

{"You mean all the analyses you've sent us are based only on the videos we've sent you?" Shota said incredulously. He remembered a few times he had only been able to find a minute or so of footage, but Deku had still provided a high-quality analysis. From the faces around the table, he wasn't the only one.

"The Shirakawa murders," Ms. Joke sounded numb, "I only sent you fifteen seconds of video…"

Deku gave a shaky smile and rubbed the back of his neck, "Yeah, that one was kind of difficult, I couldn't really find anything else in the news or online either. But the mission worked out ok and you caught the guy, so it wasn't that bad." Ms. Joke looked

slightly nauseous.}

"Perhaps we should add lessons on analysis to the curriculum." Nedzu pounders.

{Somehow, the meeting progressed without any more major surprises from Deku and they set up some tentative plans, but mostly things would depend on what happened with the cartel in the next few months. It wasn't until the meeting was wrapping up that Shota realized that this meeting wasn't in a safe part of town, which wasn't a problem for the pro heroes and professional detective in attendance but was a problem for the fourteen-year-old Deku.}

"Okay, good, someone brought that up." Mirko comments.

{"Kid, do you have someone coming to pick you up?"

Deku shook his head, "We don't have a car. I just took the train here. You don't have to worry about me." Somehow that just made Shota more worried.}

"Why am I not surprised?" Aizawa gripes.

{Tsukauchi seemed to agree with him, "I'll take him home."

"You don't have to do that detective, I'm fine, really."

"This isn't for you Deku. I, as a cop, don't feel comfortable letting a twelve-year-old walk home alone at two in the morning."

"I'm fourteen!"}

"Not helping your case, Problem Child." Aizawa says in unison with his counterpart causing suppressed laughter from the other teachers.

{"Not helping your case, problem child," Shota hid his smile behind his capture weapon when Deku had the audacity to look betrayed. He couldn't help himself, this kid had potential.}

"And we all know how Sho feels about potential." Mic teases.

{Tsukauchi was already grabbing his keys and heading for the door, "If I'm taking you home, I'll probably need a real name."

"I already told you that you don't need to do that," the kid muttered, but he gave a blinding smile anyway, "I'm Izuku

Midoriya.”}

"Too bright!"
"I'm blind!"
"It's like looking at the sun!"
"My eyes are melting!"

"Guys!" Midoriya whines with a huge grin.

{As soon as the door was closed, all semblance of professionalism disappeared and Ms. Joke squealed, “He’s so adorable! Did you know he was so adorable Eraser? Why didn’t anyone warn me?”

“Maybe because that ‘adorable’ kid is a good enough analyst to take down a serial killer with only 15 seconds of video,” Nighteye deadpanned. Ms. Joke at least had the good grace to look embarrassed.}

"Seriously Joke," Aizawa asks "do you ever take the time to think?"

"Ouch Eraser," Joke begins "if I didn't know any better I'd say you didn't like me." Aizawa growls in annoyance as she starts laughing.

{“What does it say about us that we legit thought that a fourteen-year-old was a retired pro for seven months?” Mr. Brave laughed, causing a chain reaction as each of the pros in the room started to chuckle.

Eraser raised one eyebrow, “I think that says more about him than it does about us,” but he still couldn’t stop his smile.}

"Aw," Ashido starts "Mr. Aizawa does have a heart."

"I heard that Ashido." Aizawa replies.

"It's a good thing." Ashido defends. "And for the record, we actually like having you as our teacher." Agreements ring out from most of 1-A, causing the gruff teacher to hide his blush in his capture weapon.

"I don't care." He replies, no one really believes him.

{One of the heroes sobered as he realized something, “The fact still stands that Deku is a quirkless teenager and any plans that required him to be on-site just went out the window.” The room went silent for a few moments as the heroes considered that.}

"Unless he's on an internship." Mic suggests.

{“Not necessarily,” Nighteye spoke up, “Teenagers can still be onsite if it’s part of an internship.”}

"Called it!"

{“I call dibs!” Ms. Joke yelled. Mr. Brave scowled, “You can’t just call dibs, Joke, he’s not even part of a hero course yet.”

“But he will be,” Shota said, “I have a hard time believing Nedzu would ever pass up a chance to teach someone like Deku, even if he had to get in through the sports festival.” Though that wouldn’t stop Shota from putting his name in for the recommendation exam. That kid needed every advantage he could get.}

The screen fades, and the excitement spreads through the theater at the prospect of the Deku on screen becoming a recommendation student. The teachers plan lectures as the screen loads the next chapter. The pros added their suggestions. All the while the villains impatiently bicker waiting for what they know might come to be a villainous version of U.A.'s golden boy.

Now Playing

Mastermind chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Get a job!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

The Job Search

{Most of the applications Izuku filled out were submitted online, but he found a few that wanted him to drop them off in person, so that's what he dedicated his Saturday to doing.}

"Very responsible behavior, in one so young, is quite rare." Nedzu comments.

"Shame this is the world where he basically killed someone." Mic reminds.

"Hey," Midnight cuts in "remember he's trying to find a job so he won't need to do it again."

"A small comfort." Mr. Lady complains.

"I know," Midnight ensures "but it's a better one than one hundred."

Mt. Lady sighs "Yeah, yeah, your right."

"Doesn't mean we have to like it." Kamui grumbles.

{He was feeling pretty confident in himself. He'd filled out almost two dozen applications and the economy wasn't bad due to All Might's presence, so there was no way that he wouldn't be getting a job.}

"Oh, he's in for a rude awakening." Dabi says knowingly, rubbing his hands together in anticipation.

"Wait did you actually try to get a legal job?" Shigiraki asks in disbelief.

"Believe it or not I didn't just snap and suddenly start burning everyone who crossed me." Dabi replied. Shigiraki scoffed.

{He hadn't even been all that tempted to log into his villain account since he decided to find other employment. He smiled as he walked in the door of the McDonald's he was applying for and was promptly knocked down.

"What are you doing here you useless Deku?"}

"Hey Deku?"

"Yes, Ururaka?"

"Do you know that guy?"

"Vaguely."

"Was he like this in our world?"

"Pretty much, yeah."

"Cool cool cool." Ururaka begins. "What's his name?"

"I don't remember, why?"

"No reason." She turns back to the screen ignoring his confused concern.

{Izuku looked up to see one of Bakugo's followers, the one who could stretch out his fingers. What was his name? Bakugo always just called him fingers. He caught sight of the crinkled application in Izuku's hand and laughed.

"Oh, you're applying here too? Why would they hire a quirkless idiot like you when they could have someone normal like me who actually has a quirk?"}

"Maybe because you're a fucking idiot." Bakugo snipes.

{Maybe because I have better grades and a better work ethic, not to mention a better record.}

"Oh, snap."

"Get him."
"Go off."
"Since when was he sassy?"

{I happen to know for a fact you've got a few marks on yours from getting into fights with kids from other schools. Izuku didn't say that out loud. Instead…

"Well, there's no harm in trying…"

Fingers just smirked. "We'll see. May the best man win." He brushed past Izuku, letting his knee hit Izuku's head on his way out. Izuku scowled as he watched him leave, then took a deep breath and got up, brushing himself off. He unwrinkled his application as much as possible by rubbing it flat on the edge of one of the tables before heading toward the office to turn it in.}

"Oi, nerd!"

"Yeah, Kacchan?"

"If you think this shit why don't you fucking say it?!"

"Because I have a functioning brain-to-mouth filter."

"THE FUCKS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!"

"Nothing Kacchan, I'm just stating objective facts." He replies with fake innocence as those in the theater desperately hold back their laughs. " I don't understand why you're upset."

Bakugo screams unintelligently as Kirishima pulls him back to his seat and the others calm themselves.

{Izuku hung up the phone in despair, wishing he had one of those phones he had seen in pre-quirk era movies just so he could violently slam it down in the receiver. It had been two weeks since he'd started looking for a job and so far, he'd only had one interview. Almost everywhere else had either never called him back, or simply let him know that they didn't feel he was 'the right fit for our company.' The one interview he'd gotten was with one of the only companies that didn't ask about his quirk on the application. The interview had been going really well and the people in charge had seemed to like him, at least until they finally asked what his quirk was.}

"Why does that matter anyway?" Ururaka asked everyone, standing and turning to make sure everybody knew she wanted to have this conversation now. "Seriously, why?"

"It doesn't." Aizawa answers.

"Then why," Todoroki adds "why is he being treated like this?"

"For the same reason mutant quirks are called monstrous." Midnight begins.

"For the same reason quirks that relate to anything that could be considered creepy or gross are called villainous." Mic adds.

"And why before quirks even came to be, one's skin tone could mean the difference between life and death." Nedzu finishes. "Being different is being wrong in the eyes of the world, but have hope, not because you can change the future, but because you are the future." The students look into themselves as they digest this harsh lesson and slowly return their attention to the screen.

> {The interview hadn't lasted long after that. He didn't even know why it still hurt so much that he didn't get the job, it wasn't like he hadn't been expecting it. He sighed and crossed them off the list with a red pen. There were still a few companies he hadn't heard back from, maybe it was time to hit the pavement and follow up. Show initiative.}

"Get it, green bean!" Ashido shouts at the screen.

"Green bean?" Midoriya asked.

"It's what Midnight calls you."

"Do all the teachers have a nickname for me?"

"Probably."

"Wonderful." He whines.

> {Or maybe it's time to give up. At least the villains let your skills speak for themselves.}

'do it, do it do it' echoes from the villains.

> {Izuku calmed his breathing and let his panic fuel his determination. If there was anything he was good at, it was not

giving up. He scanned his list, skimming past all the lines crossed off in red until his eyes picked up one company. McDonald's. He'd had to drop off the application in person, so it made sense to follow up in person. He hurriedly grabbed his keys and put on his shoes, looking in the mirror on the way out the door to make sure he looked presentable.}

"Please, let him get a job." Ururaka begged the screen.

{"I'm heading out Mom!" He yelled back into the house.

"Ok, honey!" She yelled back, "Be home for dinner! Be safe! Don't go chasing too many hero fights!"

He chuckled and locked the door behind him.}

"Revelry in the dark."

{Izuku stood shocked still, mind turning as it tried to make sense of what he was seeing. Fingers stood behind the register in full uniform, the bright yellow M on his hat standing out mockingly against the black. He didn't have a trainer shadowing him, so it wasn't even his first day. He caught sight of Izuku standing by the door and smirked before turning back to the customer at the register.}

"Talk about a fucking asshole." Jirou snarked.

{Izuku didn't bother going back to the office to ask about his application. If they'd hired Fingers who applied the same day, it was obvious they'd already made their decision. He walked out the door in a trance. Stupid discrimination. Why? Why did it have to be this way? Why wouldn't they even give him a chance?}

"Because that's the way the world works." Shigiraki rasps.

"Yeah, it's shit," Twice agrees. "Sure is a nice place."

{He arrived at the internet cafe before he even realized where he was going. He hesitated for a moment. Yeah, discrimination sucked, but was he really ready to walk head-on into villainy? He wouldn't be able to justify it this time by saying he didn't know how the person would use the info he gave them. Was he really ready for this? He remembered the smirk that Fingers shot him when he dropped by Mcdonald's. He remembered Bakugo burning

him and calling him useless while the teachers watched and did nothing. He remembered being told to kill himself.}

"Years of abuse, leading to being passed over for work, work given to someone far less qualified," Nedzu remarks "to say this was 'the straw that broke the camel's back' is frighteningly appropriate."

{Izuku pulled up his hood so security cameras wouldn't catch his face before walking into the cafe with his head held high and paying for an hour. He signed into his villain account and went straight to his inbox. He hadn't received any new messages in the weeks since he'd signed into that account, but the three from before were still unread. He read over them quickly, a minor hero, a sidekick, and, oddly enough, a bank robbery for Izuku to plan. This would be interesting.}

"All right!" Dabi cheers.

"Welcome to the club!" Twice shouts. "We don't want you here!"

"When does other me get to meet him?" Toga whines.

"Be quiet and maybe we'll find out." Shigiraki snaps.

{'Pro-Hero Stretch Found Dead Near Favorite Cafe.'

'Sidekick at Edgeshot Agency Killed in Villain Fight, Suspect Still at Large'

'Tokyo Gold Bank Down 10 Billion Yen After Bank Robbery'}

(Teachers/Pros)

"Thank goodness," All Might breathes "at least it didn't show the plans and endanger more heroes."

"Right you are," Nedzu replies "as much as I like counter strategizing having safe heroes is far more important."

(Villains)

"Oh, come on, show us the plans!" Shigiraki shouts at the screen.

{Izuku tried to bury his guilt as he read the headlines. After all, the world had put him through hell his whole life...

It was about time he returned the favor.}

The screen fades as the students reflect on their earlier lessons. Some are stuck in what they themselves had to go through. Others try desperately to come up with ways to help.

Suddenly Ashido stands up and runs to the bookshelf taking a notepad and some pens back to her seat with her. "Okay, listen up!" She shouts for everyone's attention. "Here's the plan. If you have any ideas on how to help with the whole..." She waves a hand in the air. "Discrimination situation at any time while we're here, just tell me and I'll write it down."

"Mandatory psych evaluation for hero hopefuls," Bakugo starts shocking everyone "and investigations into the schools those with toxic mentalities came from."

"I agree." Midoriya speaks up "I doubt either of us would be as..." He tries to find a nice way to say it. "difficult as we are, if not for Aldera."

"Exactly how bad is your old school Problem Child?" Aizawa asks.

"I don't know the exact percentage, but most end up in prison." Izuku answers with a shrug.

The room is silent for a moment as everyone processes that. When it looks like the teachers are going to ask more questions their host interrupts.

"I understand you want more information but this isn't the time nor the place. Please turn your attention back toward the screen." With a few deep breaths, everyone turns back to the screen.

Now Playing

Viridian Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Get fit!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Burning

{Izuku's everything hurt. How far had he ended up running last night? It couldn't have been more than a few miles, right? He'd come across two more muggings after that first one, so had to run to pick up a hero, then had to run back to the crime...okay, so maybe he'd run quite a bit, but still, he shouldn't be this sore, should he?}

" Yes, actually," Izuku comments " that's normal.

"I swear I thought I was gonna die after my first workout." Ururaka adds.

"It doesn't help that he can't very well pace himself in a life or death situation." Iida informs.

{"Izuku, you're going to be late for school!"

Izuku groaned and forced himself out of bed. He must be even more out of shape than he'd thought. He'd definitely have to change that if he wanted to keep outrunning heroes. Izuku smiled as he got dressed. He'd saved people last night.}

"He's always happiest when he's helping others." All Might says fondly.

{After giving his mom a quick kiss on the cheek, Izuku was out the door and on his way to school. He had to walk carefully to

avoid limping, but he'd had more than enough practice with hiding injuries that hiding sore muscles wasn't nearly as difficult as he'd been afraid it would be. Hopefully Kacchan wouldn't want to use Izuku as quirk practice before class, with how sore he was he might not be able to run away fast enough.}

"He shouldn't have to run away at all." Ashido pouts.

"Hey, Bakubro," Kirishima whispers "did you ever..."

Bakugo interrupts "I wasn't as bad as these..." He pauses trying to find the words and Kirishima waits. "I was, used to be, a bully." He takes a breath as Kirishima sucks in his own. "I'm trying, and *we* are getting better."

Kirishima studies his friend and comes to a decision. "You ever need any help, even if it's just someone to bitch to, come to me and I'll help." Bakugo looks at him in shock and he adds " I've seen you getting better and I don't want that to end."

Bakugo tries to hide his smile, but Kirishima sees it. "Whatever, Kirishima." The use of his real name causes Kiri to grin brightly.

{Izuku frowned. Would he be able to go out tonight? He needed to be pretty fast to outrun heroes, so if he was too sore, he might get caught. But it had been so...satisfying? Izuku didn't know if it was the rush he liked or if it was as simple as saving people, but either way, he didn't want to wait to get back out there. Stretching helped with soreness, didn't it? He'd have to start stretching every night before he left so he didn't hurt himself. Maybe he should look up warm-ups too?}

"When in doubt do research!" Kaminari calls out

"Maybe take your own advise sometime." Jirou jabs.

"Hey!"

{Izuku was so distracted planning his new nightly routine that he didn't see one of Kacchan's lackey's stick out his foot to trip him until he was already falling. He hit the ground hard and the contents of his backpack scattered all over the hall. The other students simply pretended not to see as they trampled his notes and Izuku felt his eyes start to water.

"Look guys! Deku's clumsy and a crybaby!"}

"Okay, fuck those kids, and fuck that school!" Dabi shouts.

"Seriously not cute!"Toga pouted.

"Says the chick who covers her 'boyfriends' in their own blood." Shigiraki snarks.

"That's different!"

"Complete different." "Totally the same!"

{Izuku tried to blink back the tears as he scrambled over the floor, trying to pick up his papers before they were ripped beyond repair. There was a pair of teachers chatting a little further down the hall, but they didn't so much as glance at Izuku even when he cried out as one of the meaner students stepped on his fingers.}

"Who ever wishes to join me in my investigation into Aldera is welcome to." Nedzu says sharply.

{"Oh sorry, Deku! I didn't see you there." The kid's smile gave away his insincerity, not that Izuku had been expecting an actual apology anyway. He finished shoving everything back into his bag and stood to get to class, trying to avoid everyone's eyes as he wiped away the tears.

"He's such a useless weakling, why does he even exist?"}

"No one needs to justify existing you!" Ururaka barks. Todoroki clenches his fists and Iida grinds his teeth.

{Izuku kept his head down and did his best to ignore the whispers as he walked into the classroom and made his way to his seat. Kacchan was still refusing to look at him, which Izuku understood. Kacchan hadn't asked for Izuku to run in to save him, so he must still be mad about that. Izuku should probably apologize, shouldn't he? But knowing Kacchan, that might make the whole thing worse. He should just leave it alone for now, right? If things got worse, he would apologize, but until then maybe Kacchan would just forget about it or chalk the whole thing up to Deku being an idiot.}

"Hey Bakugo?" Kaminari started.

"What?"

"Any guess why the other you is being so quiet?"

"How would I know!?"

"Chill dude, just asking."

{Though, it was strange that Kacchan hadn't said a single word to him since he'd stopped him on the street after the sludge villain attack. Normally, if their other classmates tried to do something, Kacchan would come along and do it better to prove that he was still the best, so since everyone had decided to be crueler to Izuku...well, he just thought it would make a lot of sense for Kacchan to use this situation to assert his dominance.

So why wasn't he?}

"It is kinda strange he's so quiet." Izuku says.

"Let's just hope it stays that way." Tsu remarks.

{Izuku quickly silenced what he was mentally calling his vigilante alarm and rolled out of bed. His soreness had gradually decreased throughout the day, but it hadn't completely gone away, so he'd probably have to pace himself tonight…

Still in his pajamas, Izuku leaned over to touch his toes and grimaced as his legs protested against the stretch. He then moved one foot back so he could stretch his calf better. He'd spent an hour that afternoon just looking up different types of stretches, specifically stretches that were good for people who did a lot of running. He'd never actually realized how important flexibility was to physical activity!}

"If anybody needs some pointers on stretches just ask." Hagakure pipes up.

{He spent the next half-hour just running through the stretches he'd researched until he was at least marginally less sore and stiff, then got dressed in his vigilante outfit just like he had the night before. This time, however, he grabbed a small green notebook that he'd bought on the way home and stuffed it and a few pens in his back pocket before heading out. He'd have to figure out how to notate the moves that the heroes used if he wanted to study them later, since there wouldn't be time to do his usual detailed drawings in the middle of a fight. Would stick figures be

enough?}

"You do drawings with your analysis?" Todoroki turns to Midoriya.

"Yeah but it's really bad." Izuku answers.

"That's what you said for actual analysis, kero."Tsu points out.

"Well, yeah..." Izuku huffs and accepts defeat.

{As he walked, Izuku thought through the patrol schedules he'd memorized. It was a Thursday night, so who would be out? Well, Rock Lock often worked later during the week so he could take the weekends off, probably to be with his family if what he said in interviews was any indication. Then there was Enigma, but her gigantification quirk might allow her to catch him too quickly, so he should probably try to avoid using her if possible. He might be able to catch Death Arms if the hero decided to stay out later for whatever reason. Mt. Lady probably wouldn't be patrolling at night if her media-mongering debut was any indication, so she wouldn't be any help. Who else?}

"Dead in one world and apparently useless in another." Mt. Lady whined "Can I just go home?"

"No can do hon," Headcase informs "you want to be here for certain things I promise you."

{It was surprising, now that he thought about it, just how few heroes patrolled at night. If he was out walking at two in the afternoon rather than two in the morning, he'd be able to have his pick of at least five or six heroes on any given day, but...well he couldn't get mad at heroes for getting tired. But from what Izuku had seen the night before, there wasn't less crime at night. If anything, there might even be more crime at night, since there weren't as many people out to be witnesses and there weren't as many heroes patrolling the streets. If Izuku were a villain, he'd probably be completely nocturnal for those reasons alone.}

"Which we can probably expect from that Mastermind world." Tsukauchi comments.

{Izuku sighed, hopefully Amplifier wouldn't get too annoyed with him if he had to use her again.}

"Hell no, sweatheart," Amplifier exclaims "I'm happy to help!"

"Must you be so loud." Aizawa grumbles.

"Sorry." She says still grinning.

{He'd already used her twice last night and she probably had better things that she usually did during her patrols, so he'd have to try to spread it out as much as possible, at least until he got strong enough to start fighting criminals himself.}

"We would prefer you didn't fight criminals at all." Aizawa huffs at the screen.

{But Izuku had decided that the running had two purposes. The first was obviously to get heroes to stop crimes in progress, but the second was to build muscle and stamina so he stood a chance when and if he ever felt confident enough to fight.}

"Unless you stumble on a crime that needs immediate attention." Iida insists. "If that were to happen you'd run in with barely a second thought."

"He's not wrong."Todoroki adds.

"Well, hopefully he doesn't get hurt." Ururaka comments.

{Not that anyone would care if anything happened to you anyway.}

The students of 1-A erupt in assurances that they do indeed care of he gets hurt. That is, until Shigiraki gets impatient and shouts "He can't hear you just sit down and shut up!" Knowing the villain was right but hating giving him the satisfaction the students stare him down as they, as slowly as possible, sit down and turn to the screen.

{Izuku shook his head. He didn't want to die before he had the chance to save anyone. Besides, he knew that getting a bully to change his targets was temporary at best. If he died too quickly at the start of a fight before the real victim had a chance to get away, then he really wouldn't have done any good. Not to mention that if he died too quickly it might just make the villain more angry and end up making things worse for the person he'd been trying to help. Not that anyone would really be surprised if that happened, he was a useless deku after all.}

"It's an unfortunate lesson to learn." Nedzu comments.

"Especially *how* he learned it."Midnight reminds.

{Izuku caught movement in the corner of his eye and looked through the window of the 24-hour convenience store he sometimes bought snacks at to see someone threatening the cashier with an electricity quirk. Who was the closest hero to here? Rock Lock.}

"Oh, he's going to get me." Rock Lock comments.

"Just think of it as practice for your little ones teenage years." Midnight teases.

{Izuku ignored the burning in his legs as he took off running as fast as he could.}

"He just never stops does he?" Sero wonders aloud.

"So manly."

{“So, how’s the wife?” Amplifier asked. “Getting ready to pop?”

Rock Lock shook his head, “She’s not due for another few months. She’s already complaining about how big she is though. I just tell her that means there’s more of her to love.”

“Oh, smooth, Romeo, smooth.”}

"Damn right I'm smooth." Rock Lock says as the others snicker.

{Usually Rock Lock didn’t stop to talk to other heroes, but it was a slow night and Amplifier had been chasing down a drunk that had been harassing women where she usually patrolled. He’d helped take him down by immobilizing his clothes, and she’d stuck around after the police had picked him up. Who knows, maybe he’d run into a situation where he could use the extra help.}

"Remember students," Nedzu informs "which ever path you take in heroics cooperation is essential."

{“Well, there is a reason she fell in love...ow!”

Something hit him on his calf and he looked down to see...a rock? He whipped around to see who threw it and caught sight of what looked to be a kid in a green hoodie and goggles smile at him

before running away.}

"He's kinda a little shit ain't he?" Dabi comments.

"Just enjoy watching heros get hot by rocks while you can." Shigiraki grumbles.

{“Let’s go!” Amplifier started following the kid, but Rock Lock held her back.

“Why? He’s just some hooligan, it’s not gonna do any good to run him down.”

Amplifier shook her head, “No, I saw the kid yesterday too and when I chased him, he led me straight to two different muggings. Don’t worry, we’re not gonna try and catch him, but if that kid throws a rock at you, he wants you to chase him.”}

"I'm not sure she should be so comfortable getting hit like that." Iida comments.

"Well it not like he can just be like, 'hey, something's going down could you follow me?'" Ururaka responds.

"I suppose."

{She started running again and Rock Lock shook his head as he followed. He still wasn’t convinced that chasing the kid was productive, but Amplifier had proven to be a decent hero, so he’d trust her for now. And well, it was a slow night, so if nothing else, following this kid was something to do.}

"God bless the slow night," Mic said dramatically "for they are few and far between." A good chunk of the Pros snickering at his antics

{Izuku stopped as soon as he realized that Rock Lock and Amplifier weren’t following him. Had Amplifier decided he wasn’t worth her time anymore? He hadn’t been trying to get her, but she’d been talking to Rock Lock and there wasn’t any time to go find another hero! Should he try to go find Death Arms? Probably, but by the time he got to Death Arms’ patrol route, the robber would be gone. He really was useless wasn’t he?

He couldn’t even get a hero correctly.}

Quiet assurances that he was doing good and they were right behind

him ring throughout the room.

{Izuku startled as he heard footsteps behind him and grinned as he saw Rock Lock and Amplifier running toward him. Rock Lock looked skeptical about the whole thing, but that didn't matter right now, what mattered right now was making sure that the convenience store robber got caught.}

"See!"

"Your doing great!"

Hurry, green bean!"

{Izuku took off and hoped that they weren't too late. Situations like robberies could often take a turn for the worse extremely quickly. His breath was starting to get painful as he pushed himself even harder. They couldn't be too late, they couldn't!}

"Faster!"

"You got this!"

"Do it!"

{Izuku didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he turned the corner to see the robber leaving the store. Was the cashier okay? Izuku didn't know what he would do if he wasn't. Wait, how would the heroes know that the guy was a villain?}

"You could chuck that soda can at him." Izuku suggested to his counterpart on screen.

"Really, Deku?" Ururaka replies.

"It is, what do you call it, 'on brand' for him. Todoroki comments.

The rest of the squad voice their agreements through their snickering and chuckles.

{Izuku didn't stop running, but leaned down and scooped up an empty soda can that someone had tossed on the sidewalk.}

"Called it."

{He only hesitated a moment before he lobbed the can as hard as he could at the villain's head. Hopefully this wouldn't be the idiot

move that killed him. Imagine what the kids at school would say.

Did you hear that Deku killed himself by throwing a soda can? Seriously, what a lame way to go, but what else did we expect from someone so worthless? }

"Sounds like those fuckers!" Bakugo barks.

"Was it really that bad?" Kaminari asks.

"That place was a special kind of hell." Bakugo answers.

"And, you?" Sero asks as Ashido and Kaminari hold their breaths.

"I don't know." Bakugo replies evenly. The squad, not sure how to respond to that, turn back to the screen.

{The villain turned around in rage, then saw the heroes behind him and Izuku almost cried with relief when the villain decided to activate his electricity quirk and charged. Now the heroes wouldn't have any doubt on who they were supposed to attack!}

"Do we get to see some heros get their asses kicked?" Dabi asks with a grin.

"Don't get your hopes up." Shigiraki warns.

{Izuku dodged behind a parked car and used the car's rubber tire to shield him from the attack. He poked his head out and Izuku smiled as he saw that Rock Lock and Amplifier had engaged the villain. Now what? Oh, yeah! The cashier!}

"Hope the little listener did some research on first aid, just in case." Mic mumbled.

"Unfortunately, he probably has first hand experience treating his own injuries from bullies." Aizawa growls.

{Izuku flung open the door and ran to the counter. The guy wasn't standing at the counter like he should be, so where was he? Had he gone to a back room to recover from the stress or was he…

"Help!"

The voice was soft and laced with pain, but a dead person couldn't talk, so that meant the cashier was alive! Izuku nearly

panicked when he ran around the counter and saw the man lying on the ground, electrical burns covering most of his face and arms. Izuku was familiar with burns and those looked like they hurt. A lot.}

"I guess that world's Kacchan used his quirk directly on me." Izuku comments.

"Directly?" Todoroki turns to him curiously.

"Well, he is the reason there are scorch marks on my notebook.

"I see." Todoroki looks at him in suspicion before turning back to the screen.

{He forced himself to calm down, but wasn't able to force a smile onto his face, "Sir, do you have a phone?"

"O-on the counter…"

Izuku hurried and dialed the police, "Yes, hello? There's a guy here with electrical burns, at least second or third degree. Yes, it was a villain attack, somebody robbed the convenience store on Randamu street. Yeah, we're still here, hurry!"}

"That's more useful than most calls."Midnight comments.

"Do we have plans for 'call in' lessons?" Mic asked.

"If we didn't before we do now." Aizawa informs.

{Izuku put the phone down and knelt beside the cashier, "Are you ok? Oh wait, obviously you're not okay, you just got robbed and you're hurt and…"

"How did you," the man rasped, "know about the robbery?"

"Oh, I, um, brought the heroes. They're fighting the guy outside. Oh, those burns look bad, let's get...ok, yeah."}

"Must of spotted the burn cream." Dabi mumbles.

"What makes you think that?" Toga chirps. Dabi simply turns to her with a deadpans stare and holds up one of his charred hands. "Oh, right." She replies face bright red.

{Izuku stood and found the burn cream and bandages. It only

took a few seconds, as he already knew exactly where they were kept because he bought them so frequently. Maybe he'd have to thank Kacchan when this was all over? No, Kacchan would probably just find that annoying.}

"No, you damn nerd," Bakugo says in exasperation "do **not** thank me for *hurting* you."

{Izuku shook his head. He needed to focus. He grabbed a rag that was underneath the counter and ran over to the soda fountain to wet it with cold water, then started dabbing the wet washcloth on the burns, being extra careful not to rub so he didn't do any more damage to the skin.

"Ice?" the man asked as Izuku set to work. "It's so hot, wouldn't ice be better?"

Izuku shook his head, "No, ice can shock your system or make the area so numb you can't tell if further damage is being done. Don't worry, once we get the burn cream on, it'll hurt a little less. And I"m sure the paramedics will be able to give you something for pain when they get here."}

"Case and point." Todoroki gestures towards his scar.

"Are you ready to tell us that story, kero?" Tsu asks.

"Not yet."

"Whenever your ready." Ururaka assures.

{The man nodded and closed his eyes and Izuku started to apply the cream. He was just wrapping the burns when the door opened and he heard Amplifier's voice.

"Kid? Are you in here? Is everyone ok? I could've sworn I saw him come in here..."

"I'm here, Amplifier." Izuku yelled. "The cashier got burned by that guy's quirk."

Amplifier walked around the counter and stopped when she saw Izuku treating the man's wounds, "Wow kid, you look like you know what you're doing."

Izuku shrugged, "I've had a lot of practice." He finished tying off

the final bandage and stood. “I’d better leave this to you guys. I already called the ambulance, so they should be here any minute. You should probably stay with him until they get here though, I’ve heard electrical burns can be tricky.”}

"They are." Kaminari comments.

"Guess you would know?" Sero asks.

"Makes sense," Kirishima adds "I mean I got this scar" he points to his eyebrow "from activating my work while rubbing my eye."

"My hands are just one big callus at this point." Bakugo adds.

{Amplifier nodded and knelt beside the man as Izuku hurried toward where he thought the back entrance was. Just because he wasn’t technically a vigilante didn’t mean it was a good idea to stick around until the cops came, especially since the heroes were a lot more qualified to deal with the situation than he was anyway. At this point, Izuku would just get in the way.}

"That's very responsible on his part." Iida comments. "Leaving it to the professionals is wise in any given situation."

{“Kid.” Izuku turned back to see Amplifier staring at him, “Thanks.”

Izuku gave her a bright smile before he turned and left.

Now to find someone else to save.}

The screen fades to the chapter select screen.

(Teachers/Pros)

"That kid has no right to be that cute." Amplifier says. "I can't wait to get to know him vicariously through the other me."

"If he survives that long." Aizawa growls.

"What do you mean?"

"What he means,"Hound Dog cuts in "is that this version is displaying borderline suicidal behavior."

"He might not fight as hard as he could and get himself killed." Aizawa states. After a few moments of silence Tsukauchi adds "Maybe even on

purpose."

As the theater settles the screen loads the next chapter.

Now Playing

Cheat Code Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Time skip

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Preparation

{The final ten months before the entrance exam flew by almost too quickly. One of the first things Izuku had done after finding his new dream was research everything he could find about analytics and intelligence gathering. He couldn't find that much, which he supposed shouldn't be very surprising, considering that he hadn't even known it was a career option, but the things that he could find emphasized computer skills and making sure that his analysis was understandable to other people.}

"Refining his formatting and taking programming lessons would be a good first step." Nedzu comments.

{Izuku had worked nonstop to make sure he was ready for the entrance exam today. It was difficult since UA's website didn't say what exactly he'd be asked to do, but he wasn't about to let that stop him! He threw himself into support with a passion, spending hours researching everything that heroes needed to know going into a situation and thinking about what he could do from behind the scenes to make them more effective.}

"Straight to entrance exam?" Ururaka asked quietly.

"It is certainly quicker than the other worlds." Iida comments.

"To be fair," Izuku replies "watching someone else study for 10 months isn't exactly entertaining."

{His hero analysis notebooks had improved as well. He still labeled them for the future, but he was now trying to focus on suggestions for improvement and on increasing the speed of his analysis. Izuku had shifted the focus of the notebooks from just heroes to everything to do with quirks and even battle strategy. He filled an entire notebook just with analyses of villains he'd seen on the news, and another with random quirks that he found on the street. He'd also stopped taking them out at school so that his bullies wouldn't be tempted to destroy these ones like they had all the others.}

"Dude did you actually destroy his notebooks?" Kaminari asks.

"HELL NO!" Bakugo snaps. Then says more quietly."I may have scorched the cover, but that's it."

"Have you apologized?" Sero asks.

Bakugo goes quiet for a moment and replies "Not yet." He takes a breath. "But I will."

{School had surprisingly gotten a lot better for Izuku over the past few months. His bullies hadn't stopped after the word spread that he wasn't trying for the hero course anymore, but now everyone was at a loss for how to actually hurt him.}

"Serves you right dipshits!" Dabi calls out.

{He hadn't told anyone at school about the support course, since the high school application plans simply listed the school, not the emphasis. The teachers assumed he'd switched his goal to general studies and from what Izuku could gather, the other students thought he was going for the nearest high school with a high acceptance rate. As a result, no one could target his new dream and all their insults fell flat. Even Kacchan had switched to mostly ignoring him, or just calling him useless, which was a huge improvement!}

"The fact that being called useless is an improvement is beyond sad." Ojirou comments.

{One of the best things that had come from his new dream, though, was actually his relationship with his mother. He hadn't realized just how much his old dream had come between them, but now that it was no longer in the way, they'd grown so much closer. Her worry seemed less like she was trying to suffocate

him, and more like it was just how she showed that she cared.}

"Are you alright Deku?" Ururaka asked seeing Izuku look at his lap in disappointment.

"I-I k-knew my mom didn't want me to be a hero but I didn't realize how much it came between us." The Dekusquad lean into him in a silent show of comfort.

{When he'd sat her down to talk about his new dream, she had immediately started crying. Izuku had understandably started panicking, wondering what he had said wrong, but as soon as she had calmed down enough to be coherent, Mom had assured him that she was just so happy and proud of him. He hadn't been quite sure how to feel about the fact that her first reaction to him giving up on his lifelong dream was to be so happy that she cried, but there wasn't much he could do about it. Maybe if she had just believed in him earlier…}

"So not only was he viciously bullied, his own mother didn't support him." Aizawa grumbles.

"An unfortunate truth." All Might says solemnly.

{Izuku shook his head as he finished getting ready to leave. It wouldn't do any good to worry about what-ifs right now. Mom was just trying to keep him safe, so it made perfect sense that she would be happy that he'd picked a safer option. She had been a little nervous about him still working in the heroics industry, but after he'd assured her that he wouldn't actually be fighting anyone, she'd calmed down and had actually been surprisingly supportive.}

"Kid pretty much grew up alone, if not even his mother had his back." Shigiraki growls.

"Mood" Dabi deadpans.

{He carefully placed his laptop in his bag and smiled. Mom had gotten it for him as a celebration gift after he'd explained what intelligence and analytics were and it had actually been her idea to sign him up for computer programming lessons at their local community center. He'd taken to them like a duck to water and it hadn't been long at all before he'd started learning to hack. Mom didn't necessarily like when he called it hacking since she thought that sounded dangerous or like something a villain would do, but

Izuku had pointed out that it would be a really useful way to gather information. He'd be protected behind a screen and the only people he'd be hacking were villains, to make sure they couldn't hide anything from the heroes. She'd come around pretty quickly after that.}

"Perhaps I should offer hacking lessons to any of the students that would be interested." Nedzu wonders grinning wildly. The teachers feel shivers roll up their spines.

{The last thing he packed was the portfolio he'd created to demonstrate his quirk analysis. UA's website said that in addition to the same written exam that all the other courses took, the support course exam consisted of a portfolio and a practical. Izuku had spent months debating what to put in his portfolio before Mom had suggested simply turning in one of his hero analysis notebooks. He didn't feel like those were quite good enough to turn into UA, though, so he'd decided to turn in a new analysis notebook that was actually properly formatted.}

"Oh God," Izuku exclaims "I'd die of mortification if any of our teachers saw my notebooks."

{He'd picked five heroes and five villains to highlight, since the website had said he'd be analyzing both as part of UA, and he'd had Mom read through all of them to make sure they didn't just sound like his normal muttering. When he'd first started asking her to read his analyses to make sure other people could understand them, she'd pointed out that he wrote almost completely in run-on sentences and sometimes dropped words completely because his brain was moving faster than his hands could.}

"Do I really?" Izuku worries "How do I fix that?"

"Just a friendly suggestion," Todoroki began "but maybe you could trust *one* of the teachers to grade them."

Izuku hesitates "But, which one?"

"Who do you trust most, kero?" Tsu asks patiently.

Midoriya goes to speak when Ururaka adds "Besides All Might."

"I guess..." He takes a moment. "I think Aizawa-sensei has earned my trust best."

"If you'd be more comfortable with one of us helping you, I'd be honored." Iida adds.

Izuku beams and enthusiastically says "Thanks, guys."

{He'd focused since then on editing his analyses into a coherent whole and making them easy to understand. The heroes he would eventually be working with needed to be able to read through and find what they needed, after all, so there needed to be some sort of formatting and he couldn't use a lot of technical jargon, not that he ever really had. He'd experimented quite a bit and had even looked up how professional analysts formatted their essays for inspiration. Overall, Izuku was actually extremely proud of how professional his portfolio looked once he was finished, and Mom hadn't had any trouble understanding it, so that was a huge plus.}

"Consulting with a trusted civilian is excellent practice for such exercises." Nedzu chirps.

{Mom scooped him into a hug almost as soon as he made it to the kitchen, "Oh baby! Do you have everything? Do you have your laptop? Will you even need your laptop? It's best to just bring it, right, even if you don't need it? Or will that be weird? They won't see it as cheating, will they? Oh if only…"}

"Oh, now I see where you get it from." Ururaka giggles at Izuku's blush.

{"Mom, take a deep breath." He pulled away from her and smiled, "I'll be fine. I already checked the website, and support course applicants are allowed to bring any technology they think they'll need. I don't know if I'll need my laptop, but I want to be able to demonstrate my hacking if they ask me to."}

"Oh I will ask you to." Nedzu grins.

{Mom sighed in relief, "Oh, that's good. I'm just so worried! I know you'll be fine and safe, but a mother worries, you know?"

Izuku laughed, "I know. Don't worry, the support course exam isn't like the hero course one, so I'm not going to get hurt. Just be glad you're not Auntie Mitsuki today. No matter what the hero course practical is, there's bound to be some aspect of combat included."

Mom wrung her hands nervously, “Oh, I don’t think I’d be able to handle it. I know Katsuki can handle himself in a fight, but I’m just so glad you’re not trying for the hero course. I’m not sure I’d even be able to let you leave the house without having a heart attack.”}

"Exactly how long have you known each other for him to call your mom auntie?" Sero asked.

"They were friends before we were born," Bakugo rumbles "His mom and mine."

{Izuku smiled sadly. His grief had long since faded to a dull ache and he hardly even noticed it anymore most days, but his nervousness about the entrance exam was bringing everything to the surface again. What if he’d made the wrong choice? What if he was meant to be a hero? What if he’d never really be satisfied with the support course? What if Kacchan was right and he really was useless and he failed the entrance exam and ended up living under a bridge and…

“Stop that, Izuku.” Mom hit him gently on the arm and smiled to pull him from his spiral. “I’m the one who’s supposed to be worrying so just leave that to me, and you focus on doing your best. Ok, baby?”}

"That was so wholesome."
"That's right green bean."
"Your gonna do great."

{Izuku smiled and nodded in determination, “Thanks, Mom. I should get going, wish me luck!”

“Good luck!” Mom started sniffling as he put on his shoes, then started full-on crying as he waved to her when he got down to the street. Izuku gripped the straps of his backpack and took a deep breath as he headed toward the train station. He could do this.}

The screen fades and many call out with 'that's where it ends' and 'stupid cliffhangers'. Eager to continue everyone quickly settles as the next chapter loads.

Now Playing

Deku? Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Anxiety

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Reactions

{Nedzu didn't know what he was expecting when he opened his inbox that morning, maybe another complaint about Togata losing his pants again despite his massive improvement since the sports festival.}

"Your still getting emails about that?" Midnight asks.

"Unfortunately." Nedzu states.

{It certainly wasn't emails from 15 pro heroes, only two of which had ever recommended a student before, all requesting to recommend a single student to UA.}

"We *all* recommended him?" Mr. Brave groans. "Isn't one enough?"

"Unless we didn't tell each other we were each recommending him." Ms. Joke answers snickering a bit.

{Nedzu sighed. Most likely this Izuku Midoriya had a technology manipulation quirk and was trying to increase his chances. It had been done before, but never this blatantly. Oh well, it would be relatively easy to check. The student really should have looked at which pros taught at UA before including Eraserhead on his list of "recommenders". He pressed the intercom, "Aizawa, would you come to my office please."}

"I can't believe *you*, of all people recommended a student." Midnight whispered.

"It only logical with how effective he's proven himself to be." Aizawa deadpanned.

{A few minutes later, his door swung open right as Aizawa was about to knock. The teacher just looked at him unimpressed and said the second thing to surprise the principal that morning, “Is this about the student I submitted for recommendations?”}

"Oh God," Mic began "Nedzu should never look surprised."

{Nedzu’s eyes widened, “You mean it wasn’t a fake recommendation?”}

"He's actually shocked!" Ashido cried holding Kaminari tightly.

"We're all doomed!" He added.

{Aizawa just glared at him, “Is it that hard to believe that I might take a liking to a kid?”}

"Yes!"

"Who said that!?" Aizawa called out to be met with silence. "That's what I thought."

{“No,” Nedzu smiled in excitement, “But would you like to explain why 14 other pro heroes also recommended the same student?”}

"You seem rather annoyed." All Might mentioned.

"Probably because I am." Aizawa answered.

{Aizawa swore under his breath, “They all recommended him too?” Nedzu nodded. Whatever story was behind these recommendations was quickly becoming more interesting. Aizawa just shook his head, “I knew we should have discussed this last night. It’s illogical for everyone to recommend him.” He sighed heavily, “Do you remember when I told you about Deku?”}

"Didn't Aizawa-sensei think you were Nedzu at one point?" Ururaka asked

"Yeah, he did at first."

{“I remember you asking if I was the one sending out mysterious analyses if that’s what you mean.”

Aizawa nodded, “Well, he’s gotten quite the reputation in the underground, but no one had ever met him face to face before last night. He’s part of the group that was invited to raid the Doraggo Cartel.”

Nedzu gestured for Aizawa to continue.

“He’s fourteen.”

If Nedzu had been drinking tea, he would have been tempted to do a spit take. He had read some of those analyses. A fourteen-year-old did that? He could see why so many pros had recommended Midoriya, if he had been there, Nedzu would probably have put in a recommendation of his own.}

"He would have recommended me himself?" Izuku bursts.

{“I see. I take it he’s already planning on attending UA?”

“Yes, he told us he’s applying to general education, but I think he’d jump at the hero course if he had the opportunity. I can try to give him a pep talk if he needs more convincing, although maybe Mic or Joke would be better for that job. He doesn’t seem to think he can be a hero.”

Nedzu cocked his head to the side, “His analysis is already sought after by working pros, why wouldn’t he think he has what it takes.”

“I get the feeling that he hasn’t had a lot of encouragement from...well, anyone really. He’s quirkless.”

Now Nedzu was really glad he wasn’t currently drinking tea. It wasn’t often that anyone managed to surprise him, and here this Midoriya had managed to do so four times in one hour, and he wasn’t even here! }

"Nedzu is shook, the world is ending!" Mic exclaims dramatically.

{“Are you sure?” Nedzu had to ask.

Aizawa just looked tired, “I activated my quirk while he was analyzing a video and I honestly think he didn’t even notice. He

didn’t pause, stutter, or even decrease the quality of his analyses, and Tsukauchi didn’t register anything he said as a lie.” He paused, “I know that there’s never been a quirkless hero before, but if anyone can do it, Deku can. But you and I know just how biased the entrance exam is and he isn’t exactly made of muscle. With his mind, I think he’ll have a better chance at passing an obstacle course and interview than an all-out brawl against robots.”

“I agree, I’ll send him the invite for the recommendation exam. Does he know you recommended him?”

“No.”

“Well, I guess it’ll be a surprise then!”}

"Fair warning the other me is probably gonna freak out." Izuku says to the theater. Calls of 'same' and 'mood' come back at him.

{It was definitely a surprise.

“Mom? Do you know why I have a letter from UA?”

Izuku looked at the envelope on the table like it was a bomb, which, for all he knew, it could have been.}

"I'd never." Nedzu chirps.

{His mind was moving a mile a minute trying to figure out why in the world UA would be contacting him three whole months before the entrance exam. Was this normal? Was this just saying that they received his application? No, if that was the case then they would have sent it right after he submitted the application months ago. Was something wrong? Were they rejecting him because he was quirkless? That had to be it. Izuku felt his heart sink. Of course, the policy allowing quirkless entry was probably a PR ploy.}

"It's sad that I could see some of the other schools doing exactly that." Midnight sighs.

{He could already feel the tears fighting to fall from his eyes, making it difficult to see the clear type of his name on the envelope. Of course, he wouldn’t be able to go to UA. He was an idiot to think otherwise.}

"Yes you can!"
"Open it!"
"Don't be hasty!"

{“Izuku? Izuku! What’s wrong? What did the letter say?”

Izuku’s voice was choked with tears, “I don’t know, I haven’t opened it yet.”}

"You weren't kidding about him freaking out." Ururaka comments.

{The alarmed look in Inko’s eyes softened, she knew how bad anxiety could make things seem. She’d struggled with it herself for years, after all. If only she’d been able to give her son a quirk rather than an anxiety disorder. She pushed that thought down along with the guilt that came with it. No use thinking that now, those kinds of thoughts weren’t going to do anything to help Izuku through his anxiety attack.}

"That explains so much." Ururaka exclaims.

"But how are you focused during stressful situations, kero?" Tsu asks.

"Rule one of anxiety survival.". Izuku answers; at his friends' curious stares he adds "Survive now, panic later."

{“Breathe with me Izuku. How about you open the letter before jumping to conclusions about what’s inside?”

Izuku didn’t respond, but he did calm down a little.

“Would you like me to open it for you?”

This time he took a deep breath and shook his head. He still reached out like he was expecting the letter to bite him, but it was better than him crying over a sealed envelope. Izuku was careful not to tear the envelope as he opened it, and Inko watched his face with concern as his eyes tracked along the paper and gradually grew wider and wider with every line.}

"Hey look we broke him." Ms. Joke giggles.

{“...uku? Izuku? Are you ok?”

“They want me to take the recommendation exam.” Izuku said numbly, “They want me to take the recommendation exam. Wha? How?”

“Well, that’s…good?” Inko tried to smile through her worries. She had been so happy the last few months since her son had finally seemed to come to terms with the fact that he wouldn’t be a hero. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to support his dreams but…she’d sleep a lot easier at night if she at least knew that he was safe.

“I…I think so, but Mom,” Izuku looked up at her, “The recommendation program is based on recommendations. Who would have…?” He trailed off, but Inko could practically see his brain making some connection or another before he whispered, “No…It couldn’t have been. But who else? They wouldn’t have. Not for someone like me. Would they?” He seemed to snap out of his reverie, “Mom, I need to message some of my friends, I’ll be in my room, ok?”}

"You seem overwhelmed." Todoroki comments.

"Side effect of anxiety is being more prepared for bad news than good news." Izuku starts "Although having friends like you guys is helping with that." Soft smiles spread across the faces of the Dekusquad in response.

{Inko just nodded, “o-ok, I’ll tell you when dinner’s ready…”

Izuku smiled but it seemed more like an afterthought. He was still shocked. “Thanks, Mom. you’re the best,” before heading off to his room.

Inko picked up the forgotten letter and read it through. It may not be what she wanted, it definitely wasn’t safe, but…if it was really what Izuku wanted…

Could she really say no?}

"Supportive Mamadoriya in the house!" Kaminari cheers.

{Izuku hurriedly logged on and opened a group message to all the pros who were participating in the raid.}

"Chat fic!" Ashido and Kaminari cheer.

"Are you two going to do that every time?" Sero asks, and they shrug in response.

{New Group

12857: (Deku)

Would anybody care to explain why I got a letter from UA this morning inviting me to take the HERO COURSE RECOMMENDATION EXAM?!?!?}

"His freak-outs are kinda cute." Ms. Joke comments.

{Several users are typing…

58726: (Ms. Joke)

Yeah, I might have had something to do with that…

87657: (Mr. Brave)

Wait?! You did?! I recommended him!

12579: (Eraserhead)

We should have discussed it. Nedzu called me into his office and thought it was a prank. It was completely illogical for us all to recommend him.}

"Yet another reason for effective communication." Aizawa grumbles.

{12857: (Deku)

!!!!!!!!!!

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

I don't think it's that illogical Eraser. After all, he's taking the exam.

12579: (Eraserhead)

While I see your point, he still would have been invited to take

the exam if he only had one recommendation. Any more than that is just inefficient.

12857: (Deku)

Hyyuaslkfjasdjfhoaefakjdiekasdeis}

"Typical excited teen keyboard smash." Ashido says fondly.

{58726: (Ms. Joke)

Deku sweetie? Are you ok?!?

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

?

12579: (Eraserhead)

?

87657: (Mr. Brave)

Oh shit guys. I think we might have killed him!}

"That's hilarious." Kaminari chuckles.

{12579: (Eraserhead)

Kid, you’re scaring us. We need you to tell us if you’re ok.}

"Wait, are they serious?" Ashido questions.

{72598: (Sir Nighteye)

Tsukauchi took him home, so he knows where the kid lives, right? Who has his number?}

Ashido turns to the pros and asks. "Is this the first time you've seen a keyboard smash?"

"Keyboard smash?" Aizawa questions.

She looks at them in horror, then explains "Sometimes the only way we can express how excited we are is by pressing random buttons in a random order and sending the result, *that* is a keyboard smash."

"Oh" is said by many Pros and teachers.

{12579: (Eraserhead)

I'll call him.

12857: (Deku)

Sorry guys, my mom came in and I had to calm down and explain to her why I was screaming.

Wait! Please tell me you didn't call Tsukauchi!

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

Sorry kid. When you stopped responding we were scared something had happened.

12857: (Deku)

@12579! Stop! I'm OK!!!! Please don't call the detective.

12579: (Eraserhead)

I explained what happened and that it's a false alarm. Sorry for overreacting Deku.

87657: (Mr. Brave)

Yeah, sorry dude.

58726: (Ms. Joke)

Ditto

87657: (Mr. Brave)

So why were you screaming? Did you see a spider?}

"Aw, is Mr. Brave scared of spiders." Joke teases.

"Hey there creepy little shits." He defends making Joke laugh harder.

{12857: (Deku)

No! It's just… do you guys really think I could be a hero?

12579: (Eraserhead)

Obviously. Your analysis is better than even most pros are capable of and you choose to use it to help heroes rather than hurt them. You've got more potential than my entire class this year.

58726: (Ms. Joke)

You expelled your entire class this year

12579: (Eraserhead)

Exactly}

A variety of quick laughs cut through the room.

{12857: (Deku)

Why? What I do really isn't that special. It's just a hobby I've had since I was a kid...

87657: (Mr. Brave)

Deku, you had the entire underground convinced that you were a retired pro for like 7 months.}

"That was the wrong thing to say." Midoriya comments.

{12857: (Deku)

I am so sorry! Did I make it sound I like I was a pro? Oh my goodness! I'm so sorry, I'm gonna have to read through all my old messages and make sure and I'm probably gonna get arrested for fraud and impersonating a pro and I am so sorry!

58726: (Ms. Joke)

OMG! He's freaking out! It's so cute!

87657: (Mr. Brave)

Hahaha! Dude. Deku. Stop freaking out. It was our fault for assuming. No one's gonna arrest you over a misunderstanding...unless Eraser's still on the phone with Tsukauchi?

12579: (Eraserhead)

If I was I'd have him arrest you, Brave, not Deku

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

I'm more concerned about why you don't believe us?

12857: (Deku)

It's just… nobody's ever told me I could be a hero before...it feels...nice?

58726: (Ms. Joke)

...Who do I need to kill?}

"I'm in!" Ururaka calls out.

"Ururaka no!" Izuku reacts.

"Ururaka yes!"

{12857: (Deku)

What?!?

12579: (Eraserhead)

Joke, no.

58726: (Ms. Joke)

Joke yes!}

"A woman after my own heart." Ururaka exaggerates.

{87657: (Mr. Brave)

How many pitchforks do I need to bring?

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

Guys, if you make Deku scream again, his mom will be the one planning murder.

12857: (Deku)

Thanks guys. It’s been fun, but I need to go reevaluate my life now…

12857 has left the chat

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

Are you happy now?

58726: (Ms. Joke)

No, because people haven't been giving my son the love and encouragement he deserves

12579: (Eraserhead)

He's not your son

58726: (Ms. Joke)

Does that mean he's yours?

12579 has left the chat

72598: (Sir Nighteye)

At this point, we can't change how people have treated him. All we can do is make sure he knows we believe in him moving forward.

72598 has left the chat

87657 has left the chat

58726 has left the chat}

The screen fades out and the crowd shuffles around getting food and taking a bathroom break before the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

> Anxiety survival 101: In a stressful situation focus on your breathing and getting out of that situation. When you are safe and comfortable let yourself go through how things could have gone wrong. At the end of each scenario remind yourself that it didn't, that you are okay. If the situation involved someone else remind yourself that you are okay, they are okay, we are okay. It might sound strange but repressing a stress response can make things allot worse.

Mastermind chapter 4

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

MaterMind: Strategist for Hire

Embracing the Role

{It had been six months since Izuku's fateful encounter with All Might. It seemed like a lot longer to Izuku: a lot had changed since he was a bright-eyed kid holding onto a dream of becoming a hero. He'd learned a lot about computers and hacking to help with his villain work and was planning on going to a high school that emphasized programming. He still did most of his villain work in internet cafes but moved around frequently to prevent being tracked.}

"That's gonna be a headache and a half." Aizawa comments.

"Hopefully we'll find a pattern and can set a trap before he switches methods." Tsukauchi adds.

{He had also tried picking up as much as he could about money laundering to prevent anyone from tracking his funds. His prices went up with each plan he sent out and he had yet to reach a point where his clients refused to pay.}

"Shorty's making bank." Dabi snarks.

{He had also been cleaning Dagobah beach.}

"The more things change," Midoriya mumbles to himself.

{It had started as a way to deal with his guilt over becoming a villain. Maybe if he did something good for the community, it would cancel out the harm he'd caused. Izuku was gradually coming to terms with his new life, letting his bitterness at society combine with his pride at a job done well to drown out his regret.}

"Watching him talk himself *into* this life is so..." Ashido starts.

"Painful." Kaminari finishes.

{He didn't get panic attacks anymore when he opened the news and saw that one of his plans had been carried out. He still got nervous and somewhat nauseous, but even that was getting replaced with satisfaction. It didn't hurt that every message in his inbox fed his ego as villains were constantly thanking him or demanding his services. For the first time in his life, he had people who didn't think he was useless! It was like a drug and Izuku couldn't get enough of it. So far, he'd sold the murder plans for ten heroes and that wasn't even counting the numerous robberies, non-hero assassinations, and other crimes that he'd planned.}

"He's done so much in so little time; I didn't even think about how dangerous my notebooks could be." Izuku stays solemnly.

"Is there anything you could do about that?" Ururaka asks.

"Like what?" He replies.

"Maybe you could make a code." Todoroki suggested.

"That might be a fun project." Izuku buzzes with excitement.

{But people were starting to catch on. Conspiracy theorists online were starting to connect the recent uptick in hero deaths and even the police were starting to suspect there might be one person behind it. Villains were starting to come to him with higher profile targets but were also starting to demand face-to-face meetings rather than just through a screen.}

"If he gets to face-to-face meetings he's gonna skyrocket in reputation all over again." Mic mentions.

"Can you imagine if he starts to participate?" Midnight adds and the group shivers.

{Which was why he'd never stopped cleaning the beach. He knew that one act of good wouldn't make up for the bad he'd done and he was getting to the point where he didn't want it to. But it was excellent muscle training, and he needed to be strong if he expected to survive in the world of villains.}

"Smart kid." Dabi comments.

"The cuties getting buff!" Toga exclaims.

"I wonder if Sensei will hire him." Shigiraki wonders.

"You mean when." Twice corrects "As in never!"

{Izuku caught movement out of the corner of his eye as he hefted a microwave and began to carry it toward the dumpster. He had started to suspect this morning, but now he was sure. He was being followed, which meant that someone had managed to figure out that he was Mastermind. The only question was who? Izuku continued his task without letting on that he knew he was being watched, opting instead to keep an eye out and get a description of his stalker. Hopefully, it was a villain. Izuku didn't quite know what he'd do if the heroes caught onto his identity this early in the game, so yeah, hopefully, villain. Izuku had to resist chuckling to himself. What had his life become?}

"Something very exciting." Dabi grins.

{By the time he left the beach at sundown, he'd discovered that his stalker was a middle-aged man with grey hair, a goatee, and apparently a love of cheap suits and cigarettes.}

"Hey," Toga starts "isn't that Giran?"

"Makes sense." Shigiraki answers "He *is* a broker."

{He was pretty good at staying out of sight, but Izuku had years of experience hiding from bullies and, more recently, stalking heroes himself. He breathed a sigh of relief, this guy was almost definitely not a hero, but if he had managed to find Izuku, he must have significant connections in the underground. Izuku made a note to check his notebooks when he got home.}

"If he has notes on villains as well as heroes he could easily deal with anyone that would try to cross him." Nedzu muses.

{Izuku had become much more paranoid since he'd thrown himself into villainy. Call it a combination of a guilty conscience and an anxiety disorder or whatever, but the end result was that Izuku was neurotically careful when it came to not getting caught. He had an irrational fear that, somehow, a cop would try posing as one of his clients online, get him to send a murder plan

for a hero, then somehow use the IP address to track him and take him to jail. Yeah, maybe Izuku had been watching too many crime dramas, but it *could* happen.}

"How have we not thought to do that?" Tsukauchi asks aloud.

{Anyway, he'd started to learn as much as he could about the villain underground so that he could reasonably vet his clients. It helped that he'd started asking about his clients' quirks and skill sets so that he could incorporate them into his plans, but a majority of his information came from the dark net and hacking into some of the less secure police databases. Just like he had notebooks of information on heroes, now he had them on villains and it came in handy in unexpected ways.}

"Reinforce police databases added to the list of things to do when we get home." Nedzu mumbles to himself.

{One client a few weeks ago had commissioned him to help their group rob a casino. It was a difficult job with a big payout, so Izuku had only demanded part of his fee upfront. After the job was done, he'd messaged the client about the rest of his money and gotten the response of *Thanks, but you should be lucky with what you've got and you're not getting any more from us.* Idiots really. He'd vetted them beforehand and checked their quirks against the police registry, so he knew who they were, where they lived and, most importantly, their weaknesses.}

"Well they're fucked." Bakugo barks.

{In the midst of his fuming, it hadn't taken him long to find a few villains with a grudge against their little group. Turns out Izuku wasn't the only one these guys had tried to screw over. It was a little harder to find out how to contact their enemies, but once he did they seemed more than happy to pay Izuku for the chance to take them down. Needless to say, no one had tried to cheat Mastermind out of his fee since.}

"Well that's one way to deal with it." Izuku mumbles.

{It came in handy now as he looked through descriptions of various known villains in an attempt to figure out who was following him. The guy didn't have an obvious quirk from what he could see, but who would have a reason to come after him? A previous client? No dice. Izuku continued rifling through the pages until...bingo. *Giran* . A broker, Izuku leaned back in his

chair, of course.}

"Haven't we been trying to track down this particular broker for a while now?" Aizawa asked.

"Unfortunately." Tsukauchi responds

{The name nagged at him though, like he should be more familiar with this guy than just a passing entry in his journal. His eyes skimmed over the notes, lingering on the known connections list when a note he'd made in the margin caught his eye, more specifically, a username. *Oh, right*. Giran was the broker who'd reached out to him online a few times early on, offering to arrange meetings with big-name players in the villain world and provide any necessary gear.}

"An evil talent agent." Ashido whispers.

"This is so bad." Kaminari hisses.

{Izuku had soundly refused. He had been so new to the game when Giran had reached out and hadn't yet grown comfortable with calling himself a villain. He had also been scared. One of the main reasons he liked working online was that his skills could speak for themselves. He had a sneaking suspicion that Mastermind's credibility would tank the moment word got out that he was just a quirkless teenager.}

"Just kill the fuckers," Dabi yelled, "show em who's *boss*!"

{*Things are different now*, Izuku mused, *yeah, I'm still a quirkless teenager, but at least I've gotten used to the fact that I'm a villain now. I've got a reputation*. A big reputation, if the copycat Mastermind's popping up to sell inferior plans was anything to go by. *A reputation I need to uphold*. So far, Izuku had been able to take care of the copycats fairly quickly, using the same methods he used for cheating clients, but one could never be too careful. *Maybe it's finally time to start showing a physical presence.*

And with that, Izuku pulled out a notebook and began to make plans.}

The screen fades as the groups chatter. A discussion of villain vs heroes marketing schemes can be heard. The teachers seem to be making lesson plans and a security adjustment list. All the while the league is placing bets on which one of them meets him first. As the

screen loads everybody turns back.

Now Playing

Viridian Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Baby's first fight. (Viridian, me, and the series)

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Names

{Shota looked across the desk at Tsukauchi as he finished the paperwork for his latest arrest, “I heard you got yourself a new vigilante.”}

"Aizawa-sensei!" His class cheered.

{Tsukauchi rolled his eyes, “If you can even call him that. The kid hasn’t actually *done* anything yet. His MO is that he’ll find a crime, then go and find a hero.”}

"Doubt that will last long." Aizawa grumbles.

{“Seems like he’s doing some good then.”

Tsukauchi looked tired, “Yeah, but it turns out that most heroes don’t take kindly to having rocks thrown at them.”

Shota snorted, “He throws rocks at them?”}

"Did Aizawa just laugh?" Kaminari asked.

"To be fair," Ashido starts "anyone would."

"True."

{Tsukauchi nodded, “At least he’s not actually hitting them with the rocks anymore. The first week or so, the heroes all came in with mild bruises. A few days ago he started just tossing the rocks

at their feet, though, so that's an improvement. ”

“His goal was always to get the heroes' attention, not hurt them, wasn't it?” Shota said. “The rocks were just a way to make sure they chased him. He was probably trying to get them angry so they'd pay attention to him.”}

"And he stopped so no harm done in my opinion." Amplifier comments.

{“That's what we decided too.” Tsukauchi offered Shota a cup of coffee that he gratefully accepted. “Word of him has been spreading pretty fast though and heroes in the area are starting to recognize him. That's probably part of why he's stopped hitting them with the rocks. Once he's got their attention, heroes know that they need to follow him. Apparently, he's pretty good at sniffing out crimes A lot and most of the heroes don't mind the extra help, considering he's not really hurting anything.”}

"They like my help?" Izuku asks.

"A lot of little things tend to fall through the cracks," Iida explains "my brother always worried about that."

{“What's he look like?” Shota asked. “In case I come across him?”

“Well, he's kind of plain as far as vigilantes go.” Tsukauchi said, handing him a sketch of the vigilante. “He wears a dark green hoodie with matching goggles, then black jeans. The most flashy thing about him is his red shoes, but even those don't appear to be a statement piece.”

“Hmm,” Shota looked at the sketch. There really wasn't anything that special or eye-catching about him. “It's strange, most vigilantes I've met try to go for something more distinctive. This guy kinda reminds me of myself, he doesn't care what he looks like, as long as he gets the job done.”}

"Helping people is all I really care about, I'd do it even if no one ever knew about it." Izuku comments.

"That's why you're the best!" Ururaka chirps.

{“Yeah, most vigilantes are failed heroes, so they see themselves as heroes, but this kid is different.” Tsukauchi said. “He doesn't even try to fight the villains!”}

"For now." Aizawa grumbles.

{“You’ve said *kid* twice now.” Shota looked at the sketch gain. “Just how old is he? Early twenties?”

Tsukauchi shook his head, “Amplifier’s the only one that has had any close contact with him, but she said that, based on his voice and the way he held himself, he’s a teenager, and a young one at that. She pegged him at around 12 or 13 because he was so short and skinny, but I think it’s more likely that we’re looking in the 16-18 range. Since most vigilantes are failed heroes, he's got to be old enough to have taken and failed the entrance exams.”}

"So close, yet so far." Ashido sighs dramatically.

{“But this kid *doesn’t* see himself as a hero the way other vigilantes do.” Shota pointed out. “Crawler, Pop Step, and even Stendall all saw themselves as heroes even without licenses, and they each came up with their own particular brand of dress and behavior. This kid doesn’t even fight. Has he even given himself a name yet?”

“No, even when he spoke with Amplifier he didn’t introduce himself.” Tsukauchi said. “But the heroes who’ve encountered him so far have taken to calling him the Green Guide.”}

"That's not the name Headcase gave us." Todoroki points out.

"Maybe he'll change it, kero."

{Shota sn'cause, “*The Green Guide?* Seriously? They couldn’t think of anything less obvious?”

Tsukauchi shrugged, “Well, the kid wears green and leads them to crimes in progress. I don’t know, the alliteration is kinda catchy.”

Shota rolled his eyes, “Yeah, sure, cause that’s obviously super important to the kid.” He sighed. “It’s just...I hope he keeps staying out of fights. If he gets in any deeper, he’ll only end up getting himself killed.”}

"You jinxed it." Mic turns to Aizawa.

"He hasn't met the Problem Child yet," Aizawa retorts "he couldn't possibly know."

{Izuku wandered the now familiar streets in search of crime. He'd been doing this for two weeks now. *Two weeks!* He still hadn't mustered the courage to get in a single fight, but the heroes were actually starting to recognize and trust him. He'd never realized just how lax heroes were toward vigilantes. Maybe it was because he wasn't actually doing a lot of vigilante-type stuff but the heroes never tried to track him down after a fight or anything.}

"Undergrounds try to work with vigilantes unless they cross the line into full-blown villainy." Aizawa comments.

"Which is why so many do." Endeavor gripes.

{And Izuku was actually starting to get stronger! The first few days had been terrifyingly painful just from the dramatic increase in physical activity, but his body was starting to get used to it now. Maybe he was just imagining it, but when he'd gotten dressed before going out, his calves had been noticeably firmer. And he was *definitely* getting more flexible from all the stretching he did before and after his patrols.}

"Green Bean's getting fit!" Ashido cheers.

{He was also getting more familiar with the sounds that happened every night. There had been a few times in which he peeked into an alley expecting to find a fight, only to find that it was just a cat that had knocked over a trash-can lid, but now he was getting better at recognizing that sound, even if he still double checked to make sure since he didn't want to miss anything.}

"Nothing wrong with being cautious." Rock Lock commends.

{That familiarity with nighttime sounds was why a slight rustling accompanied by what sounded like muffled whimpers was enough to raise red flags. He rushed in the direction of the sound and his eyes widened when he saw a guy with some kind of mole quirk pressing a brunette woman against the brick wall using one of his massive hands to cover her mouth while the other wandered...to less innocent places.}

"Get your hands off her!"
"Rotten scum!"
"You give villains a bad name!"

{He should get a hero. Which ones were close to here again?

But...Izuku had watched a lot of fights, not only over the last two weeks but during his entire hero-obsessed lifetime. He was familiar with battle stances and how to not get knocked down by an opponent and this guy looked like a strong breeze would blow him over. Probably, the only reason that the girl hadn't been able to escape was that he was so much bigger than she was. The guy was completely off balance!}

"He's not wrong." Midnight murmurs.

"Don't encourage him." Aizawa commands.

{Izuku should *really* get a hero, he was wasting time, but his mind couldn't help running through how he'd beat this guy if he had to fight him. He had a mole quirk, which meant that he probably relied mostly on his sense of smell since his eyesight was most likely poor. He also didn't have good situation awareness, since Izuku had been standing there for almost a minute by this point and he still hadn't noticed. Oh no! He'd been standing there for almost a minute! He needed to go get a hero!}

"Hurry!"
"Run!"
"Come on!"

{Unfortunately, the woman had more situational awareness than her attacker, and right as Izuku was about to turn and run, she caught his eye. Her muffled screams got more frantic and Izuku couldn't help himself as he ran forward to save her.}

"I believe the term is 'called it.'" Iida said.

{Crap, crap, crap! What was he supposed to do? This guy was so big and Izuku still didn't know how to fight at all! Umm, ok, the mole quirk meant that the guy was mostly blind, but he could still probably smell Izuku if he wasn't careful, so...Izuku glanced around and saw a half-full takeout container on the floor by one of the dumpsters.

He picked it up and swallowed down his own disgust, "Hey Moleman!"}

"The nerd needs trash-talking lessons." Bakugo grumbles.

{Oh, Kacchan would be ashamed of that insult. It wasn't even an insult, it was just an observation that was phrased as an insult.

Like Deku. But even if it wasn't very creative, it did the trick and Moleman turned around only to get a face full of half-rotten takeout. His heightened sense of smell would no longer be a problem.}

"Ew!"
"Gross!"
"I'm gagging!"

{Moleman let go of the woman as he pawed desperately at his face to wipe away the stench, but Izuku didn't give him much of a chance as he lunged for his legs. The guy was already off balance, so if Izuku could just trip him…

The man fell hard onto his back and Izuku smiled briefly before he realized that down did not mean out. Moleman grabbed Izuku's leg and yanked him down as well, then let go as he scrambled to his feet and kicked Izuku in the gut. Izuku grimaced, but he'd been kicked before, so he just shrugged off the pain and got up.}

"Get him!"
"Go for the eyes!"
"Castrate him!"

{Okay, so plan A didn't work, what was plan B? Who was he kidding, he hadn't even had a plan A! Ok, so how did the heroes beat the villains? Well, they beat them with their quirks, but that wasn't going to work here. So what could Izuku...wait, Midnight had her whip right? That's how she beat female villains or villains that could hold their breath for a long time. So if he couldn't use a quirk to defeat Moleman, maybe he could use some kind of weapon?}

"Stab the bitch!"
"Punch him out!"
"You better survive this!"

{He really should have thought this through. He had a pencil in his back pocket, but that was it. Moleman suddenly reached out and slammed Izuku against the wall, holding him a foot off the ground by his throat. Izuku struggled to breathe as the hand started to crush his windpipe and tried to blink away the black that was starting to encroach on the edges of his vision. Was...was he going to die? Had the girl gotten away? He glanced over to the

side and saw her watching the fight with wide eyes.}

"Worry about yourself, dumbass!" Dabi shouted.

{No! He couldn't die yet! Izuku grabbed his pencil and jammed it into Moleman's hand.}

A hiss of sympathy echos through the room. Some shake out their hand feeling the phantom pain of the injury on screen.

{Moleman screamed and let Izuku go. That trick probably wasn't going to work a second time and Moleman was getting angrier by the minute. What else could he use?}

"You need to carry some weapons with you if you do this again." Izuku said through gritted teeth.

{Well, he'd need to knock the guy out. He wasn't strong enough yet to do that by punching like All Might did, but some kind of blunt-force trauma would probably be best. Oh, that sounded so bad, maybe it was for the best that Izuku couldn't be a hero.}

"Yes you can!" Ururaka bit.

{As Moleman recovered from being stabbed, Izuku glanced around the alley again until he saw a dented can of beans that someone had thrown away. He ran over to it as Moleman charged and grabbed his legs. Izuku slammed onto the cement belly-first but managed to grab the can right as Moleman started to drag him backward.}

"Fuck him up!"
"Ream him!"
"Break his nose!"

{Izuku twisted his body and slammed the can into Moleman's hands with enough force to make him let go. His body was running on pure adrenaline at this point and it seemed like everything was simultaneously going too fast and too slow. Izuku managed to dodge another grab and used his can to bludgeon Moleman's shoulder.}

"Not bad for a first fight." Mirko comments.

{Moleman aimed a punch for his head, but he was broadcasting his movements the way Kacchan sometimes did, so it was easy

enough for Izuku to duck. The punch threw Moleman off balance again and Izuku hit him with some weird mix of a punch and a backhand, making him stumble back.}

"Your battle instincts at their finest." Iida commends.

{Izuku didn't wait for Moleman to recover before he launched his next attack. The can got slippery as Moleman's nose started to bleed. Or maybe some of that blood was from Izuku's knuckles? Izuku didn't stop hitting though until his opponent was on the ground. He waited tensely for a long moment until he was certain that Moleman was knocked out, then turned to the girl he'd just saved.}

"Well that was brutal." Kaminari comments.

{"Are you ok?"

She looked at him in shock, "Am *I* ok? You just fought a guy twice your size!"

Izuku looked down at the guy on the floor, "Actually, I think he's probably more like three times my size, I'm pretty small, but I don't think his size is just because of his quirk…"}

"Not important!" Shigi snarks.

{"Earth to kid! Are you actually ok? He looked like he hurt you…"

Izuku shrugged, "It's nothing I'm not used to, don't worry about it."}

"That just makes us worry more." Aizawa huffs.

{The woman didn't look any less worried, but Izuku decided that trying to reassure her probably wouldn't do any good. He turned to leave but almost tripped over Moleman who was still unconscious on the ground.

"Oh! Almost forgot about him, um, hmm, I should really get some zip ties or something to bring out, I wonder...do you have any zip ties on you?"

The woman let out a stressed huff of laughter, "No? Are you telling me you ran into the fight without any way to tie the guy

up?”

Izuku shrunk back a little, “I normally just run away and get the heroes. I’m sorry, I’m really bad at this. I’m not even a real vigilante.”

“No, no, you’re doing great.” The woman tried to reassure him and Izuku gave her a shaky smile. He wasn’t doing great.}

"Am I crazy," Hagakure starts "or is that weirdly cute."

"I see it too." Momo replies.

{“Um, there’s got to be something around here we can use…” He muttered. “Maybe if I can find some rope? Oh, I can tear this old t-shirt into strips. Probably won’t stop him for long, but hopefully, the police will arrive before that’ll be a problem…”

The woman stared at him as he tied up Moleman as tightly as he could, “Um, do you need me to do anything?”

Izuku shook his head, “If you could call the cops after I leave, that’d be great. I mean, you should probably stick around so you can explain what happened, 'cause otherwise, they might not actually be able to arrest this guy, but if he starts waking up, you should probably run.”

The woman nodded and Izuku grabbed the fire escape. He didn’t want her to have to wait too long, which she probably would have to if he just walked out onto the street.

“Wait!”}

"Hang on!" Ashido cried "Isn't she one of the reporters that broke into UA before the USJ."

"She totally is." Kaminari replies.

{Izuku stopped with his hands still on the fire escape, “Yes? Are you hurt? Do you need me to give you first aid?”

The woman shook her head, “No, you just never told me your vigilante name. What am I supposed to call you, Green Guy?”

Izuku shrugged, “Sure, if that works. I don’t really care what people call me, I just wanna help people.”

With that, he turned around and scrambled up the fire escape. He saw the woman getting out her phone as he got to the roof, so that was good. He should probably try to take the rooftops home so he didn't run into any of the cops as they drove to the alley. He'd never hopped from building to building before, but it couldn't be too hard, right?}

"Nope," Aizawa growls "that's something you practice at a safe elevation."

{Izuku backed up and got a running start as he prepared to jump, only the chicken out with a yelp as he arrived at the edge of the roof. He tried to calm his breathing down. That...was a lot scarier than he'd hoped it would be. He could try again, but...he really didn't want to. It was probably best not to try again, anyway, since if he jumped and ended up falling then they'd think it was suicide and that would defeat his whole purpose of being a vigilante which was so that no one would get hurt when he died.}

"Oh right," Kaminari starts sadly "I forgot how depressing this world was for a second there."

{He gave a determined nod, found another fire escape that led into the next alley over and climbed down. Then he lowered his hood, put away his goggles, and started walking home, grimacing as the adrenaline wore off and he realized how much pain he was in. He should call it a night, he wouldn't be able to run fast enough to help anyone in this state.

Good thing he already had practice treating his own injuries.}

"At least he knows when to call it a day." Midnight comforts.

{Hina Yu smiled as she watched the vigilante disappear and dialed her boss. She'd call the police in a minute, but they would ask her to stay on the line until someone arrived and she didn't want to wait to make this call.

"Yu? What are you doing calling me at three in the morning?"

"I have tomorrow's headline!"}

"Called it!" Ashido called.

{"What? What happened?"

She grinned, “I was just saved by a new vigilante, I’m fine, don’t worry. He seems to just be starting out, so I’m positive no other paper has talked about him yet. He said he often gets heroes to respond to crimes that would otherwise be overlooked and he’s super sweet and nervous. I think he might be a teenager.”}

"Aw, she's so excited about the adorable Green Bean." Midnight squeals.

{“Really?” Her boss sounded much more awake. “That is a headline, maybe not the front page, but there’s definitely a story there. Get me a piece by morning and we’ll run it on the website. If it gets enough hits I’ll give you the go-ahead to do more research and we’ll do a full piece by the end of the week. What’s your vigilante’s name?”

Hina frowned. He’d said that Green Guy was fine, but a name like that wouldn’t sell any papers. She needed something flashier, something that would make people curious when they saw it in the headline. Well, he *was* green, and he didn’t seem to care what people called him, so…

“Viridian.” she said. “Let’s call him Viridian.”}

"So a reporter *gave* this one his name." Todoroki theorizes.

"Todoroki no." Izuku whines.

Todoroki turns to Midoriya, looks him in the eye, and completely straight-faced says "Todoroki yes." Causing the Dekusquad to burst out laughing as he cracks a smile.

As the theater settles the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Cheat Code Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

A new friend.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Arrival

{Izuku actually ended up getting to UA a few minutes early, early enough that he didn't even see Kacchan, who should be taking the hero course exam today, on his way in. He looked up at the building, not even bothering to conceal his awe considering that he was far from the only applicant gaping at the fact that they were actually at *UA!* After a long moment, he shook himself and hurried into the building, taking everything in as he followed the signs to the support course exam orientation.}

"I remember staring at the gate for so long." Izuku remembered.

"Right before nearly faceplanting on the steps." Ururaka teased.

"Ururaka!" He whines.

{He ended up in a large room lined with desks that were almost completely empty except for a few other early arrivals like himself. Izuku swallowed nervously as they all looked up at his arrival, his anxiety already getting the better of him as he ran to one of the seats in the back corner. He *really* wasn't ready to meet his future tormentors quite yet.}

"The fact that he refers to any potential student as 'future tormentors' is disconcerting at best." Nedzu comments.

"All we can do is hope our other selves can help him." Midnight

grumbles.

{After a few minutes of sitting in the oppressively silent room, Izuku decided that he needed to find something to distract himself. The longer he just sat there, the more he worried that he was somehow making a terrible mistake, that he would fail the exam, or that the proctors would come up to him and tell him that UA had actually decided to not accept quirkless applicants this year. He could always analyze his fellow examinees and see if he could guess their quirks, but he knew that as soon as he started analyzing, he would also start mumbling, which would sound even louder in the quiet room, and then any hope he had of fading into the background would go out the window.}

"Good lord," Hagakure starts "I just wanna jump through the screen and hug the poor thing."

"Take Shoji with you." Ojirou suggests.

"I *have* been told I give pretty good hugs." Shoji replies.

"You do have a lot of arms." Dark Shadow squeaks.

"Dark Shadow." Tokoyami whispers blushing at his quirk's boldness.

{Izuku thought for a moment before getting out his laptop. From what he'd read, UA had impressive cyber security, so it wouldn't hurt to take a look at their firewalls, right? He looked at the clock, he still had another twenty minutes until the exam started and if he didn't do anything, he was going to go insane, so this would be a good way to keep himself busy and satisfy his curiosity at the same time.}

"Is the Problem Child seriously trying to hack UA out of boredom?" Aizawa asks incredulously.

"It would seem so." Nedzu grins.

Meanwhile....

"Really Deku?" Ururaka turns to him.

"That's not me!" Izuku defends.

"But is it something you would do?" Todoroki asks to be met with silence.

{The rumors really hadn't exaggerated UA's security. Anywhere that Izuku would normally look for holes or backdoors were patched up and defended, and he grinned as he had to get more and more creative the more he poked around. Most villains would probably just take one look at the programs and decide to go hack somewhere less secure. Maybe if he were to…

"What are you doing?"

Izuku yelped and slammed his laptop shut, leaning back as far as he could to get away from the girl who was suddenly *way* too close to his face. He glanced around the room to find that most of the seats were filled. How long had he been trying to get past UA's firewalls? And more importantly, how long had this girl been there and how hadn't he noticed when she got in his personal space?}

"IT'S ME!" Mei shouts out scaring the good majority that didn't know she was there.

"Hatsume," Powerloader starts "have you been here the whole time?" He narrows his eyes "How have you been so quiet?"

"The living light had blueprint materials on the supplies shelf and wouldn't give me any tools!" Mei pouts.

"Once again Mei," Headcase reminds "most tools can be used as weapons and there are villains in the room."

"I can work with a screwdriver!" Toga helpfully calls out.

"Whatever!" Mei turns back to the screen, the others follow suit.

{Also, she was a *girl!*}

Small snorts and huffs of laughter can be heard throughout the room.

{"Uh, I, um…" He swallowed nervously, but the girl didn't seem to be backing off anytime soon. "Nothing?"

The girl grinned savagely, her pupils narrowing slightly, something that was made more obvious by the crosshairs in them, "If it was nothing, you wouldn't have been doing it!"

Were the crosshairs a result of her quirk? If so, then what was it? It was obviously something to do with her vision, and she seemed

to be able to change her pupil size at will, so maybe it was like a telescope? That would be really cool! What were the limitations and...oh, she was still staring at him.}

"Yes, yes she is," Shigiraki snarks "how observant."

{“Do you have a telescope quirk?” Izuku blurted out the question before his self-control caught up to his curiosity, then promptly turned bright red and started freaking out. Of course, the first time a girl ever willingly talks to him and he has to make a fool of himself by asking about her quirk like some kind of creepy idiot.}

"Why do you think your quirk questions are so creepy?" Todoroki wonders.

"Maybe I wrote down that a girl's quirk was pretty and everyone decided I was stalking her." Izuku growled.

"Seriously!" Ururaka reacts "That's it?!"

"Kids are cruel, that's more than enough." Izuku replies.

"What was her quirk, kero?" Tsu asks gently.

"She could make auroras in her hands." Izuku smiles softly.

"That does sound pretty." Ururaka admits begrudgingly.

"Shame one's quirk cannot account for one's personality." Iida says evenly.

"Iida!" Izuku turns to him in shock.

"If this theater is to be treated as a casual setting," Iida explains "then I am aloud to 'clap back' I believe the term is."

{The girl didn’t seem put off by it though, in fact, her grin just got bigger, “I’ll tell you about my quirk if you tell me what you were doing on your computer!”

Izuku thought for a moment. He *really* wanted to know more about her quirk, but...would she think he was weird? What was he thinking? She *already* thought he was weird! And he didn’t know why, maybe it was because she had gotten so close to him despite never meeting him before, but she didn’t really seem like the type to stop talking to people just because they were weird. Or maybe that was wishful thinking.

“I, uh,” he smiled sheepishly, “I was trying to get past UA’s firewalls?”}

"Guys, I have an idea." Kaminari whispered.

"What?" Ashido asks.

"Just watch." He stands and turns toward the Dekusquad "Hey, Midoriya!"

"Yeah Kaminari?"

"If I answer any question you have about my quirk would you...?"

"Yes!" Izuku interrupts.

"But I didn't even..."

"Yes." Izuku replies firmly.

Dabi calls out "Hey Golden Boy, maybe we could..."

"No."

"Come on, it would...."

"Nope."

"FINE!"

{The girl blinked at him for a moment, then laughed loudly, “That’s awesome! Hacking UA before the exam even starts, what a way to make a first impression!”

Izuku’s eyes widened and his stomach dropped, “Oh no! What was I thinking? I just wanted something to do and I’ve probably ruined my chances! They’re gonna think I’m some kind of villain and…”

He was startled from his mumbling by the girl flicking him on the forehead, “Did you have any luck?”

He tilted his head, “What?”

“Did you have any luck hacking UA?”

“Uh, no?” Izuku didn’t know why she didn’t seem freaked out at

all, in fact, she was acting like him hacking UA was a *good* thing.}

"Because it's so cool!" Mei calls out.

{“Too bad.” The girl shrugged. “That probably would have been a great way to get your foot in the door.”

Izuku thought about that for a moment, but it made his brain spin, so he just shook his head, “Well, I told you what I was doing. What about you? What’s your quirk?”

“Zoom!” The girl was grinning again and Izuku would probably have been intimidated if her energy wasn’t so contagious. “You weren’t that far off with your telescope idea, I can see things as far away as five kilometers, but I mostly use it to zoom in on tiny things while I make my babies!”}

"What the fuck!?"
"Babies!"
"Aren't these kids fifteen!"

Clearly not everyone has heard how she talks before.

{Izuku’s face went red again and he sputtered, “B-babies?”

She nodded, “Yep! I make all sorts of cool babies for heroes to use! My favorite baby is the jetpack I designed!”}

"Oh," Toga starts "she means her inventions."

"That does make more sense." Twice adds "*Completely irrational!"*

{She dug in her bag for a moment before slamming a grease-smeared folder in front of him. Izuku hesitated for a moment, but she looked like she was expecting him to do something, so he opened the folder and looked at the detailed blueprints inside, “These are really cool! Is this your portfolio?”

She nodded, “Where’s yours?”

Izuku put his laptop back in his bag and handed her his own portfolio before going back to looking through her blueprints. A lot of it was technical jargon that he didn’t understand, but after a minute, he thought he had a good idea of how the jetpack was supposed to work, “Is this based on Air Jet’s backpack?”

“Yep! It’s a super-cool flying baby!” The girl looked to be about

halfway through his portfolio. “And these are really cool notes, Hacker-Kun, but weren’t you supposed to bring blueprints for your babies?”}

"Perhaps we should advertise the less popular tracks," Nedzu suggests "expand public knowledge as it were."

{Izuku rubbed the back of his neck, “Well, um, actually, that’s only for the invention track. I’m applying for intelligence and analytics, so, yeah…”

“Hmm,” the girl looked back and forth between Izuku and his portfolio, then grinned, “that means that we’ll have to work together so I can make super awesome babies based on your notes!” She stuck her hand out for him to shake, “I’m Mei Hatsume, future CEO of Hatsume Industries! What’s your name, Hacker-Kun?”

Izuku grinned and took her hand, “Izuku Midoriya. Pleasure to meet you, Hatsume!”

“Oh just call me Mei, Izu-kun..” Hatsume said dismissively, ignoring the way Izuku’s face turned red again at the nickname. “We’ll be working together a lot once school starts, so there’s no point in pretending to be formal, don’t ya think?”

Izuku wasn’t really sure, but he wasn’t about to say otherwise and risk ruining whatever this was, “S-sure thing, M-mei-chan.”}

The Dekusquad startled at Mei suddenly plopping down in their area. She turned to the group seeing their confusion. "If those versions of us are gonna be friends I'm sitting with you." She says matter-of-factly. Iida looks a bit unsettled but the others turn back to the screen patting him on the back.

{Mei nodded and handed his portfolio back, seemingly satisfied with the nickname, and Izuku breathed a sigh of relief as he returned her portfolio. Wait, were they friends now? The only person he ever had a nickname for before was Kacchan, and they’d been friends once, so did that mean that Mei was his friend? Or were they just future business partners? What were people supposed to do with their friends? Izuku suddenly felt more nervous about his new friendship with Mei than he did about the exam, which he supposed was a good thing, since distracting himself from his exam anxiety was what he’d set out to do in the first place.}

"It's so cute but so sad." Midnight pouts.

{The background chatter in the room died down and Izuku and Mei looked toward the front of the room to see Powerloader standing on the stage holding a mic.

“Oh my goodness, it’s the support hero Powerloader!” Izuku couldn’t help muttering, but Mei actually didn’t seem to mind, something he’d have to unpack later, “He’s one of only a handful of heroes in Japan that has both a hero license and a support license, which means he can make his own support items, but he normally focuses on making them for…”

“Welcome, everyone, to the entrance exam.” Powerloader cut off Izuku’s muttering and Izuku slammed his mouth shut so he wouldn’t start muttering again as the hero continued, “I’m Powerloader, the head of the support course here at UA, which should be the department you applied to. If you didn’t apply to the support course, you’re in the wrong place, so just leave and there are staff members at the front office who can help you find where you’re supposed to be.”

There was an awkward shuffling for a moment as everyone looked around, but no one got up to leave, so Izuku assumed they were all in the right place.}

"Considering all those signs they'd have to be a special kind of idiot to get lost." Shigiraki snipes.

"Kinda like you."

"WHICH ONE OF YOU HERO BRATS SAID THAT!"

"Yeah, sure, shout at them, that'll get them to answer." Dabi drips sarcastically. Shigi grumbles as he sits back down.

{“Alright, first off is going to be the written exam, which will be taken here. Staff members will be handing out the exam as I explain a few things, so just ignore them and don’t break the seal on your exam until I say you can begin. The exam is identical for all four courses at UA, but yours has an additional section with questions on support specifically. You’ll have three hours. Next, you’ll take the practical exam, which will be divided based on your emphasis. You’ll have four hours to create a functional support item, for the invention track, or a finished costume prototype, for the design track, based on the prompts given.

You'll turn in your portfolio when you start your practical exam."}

"What about the intelligence track?" Izuku asks in worry.

"Majima-sensei," Mei turns on the teacher " why didn't other you mention ten million's practical!"

"Most likely," Powerloader replies in a calming manner "he just forgot because applicants for intelligence and analytics are so rare."

Mei turns toward Izuku "See, other you will be fine."

"Okay, alright, hell be fine."

{And now Izuku's anxiety was back. What was *his* practical exam going to be? He'd gathered that there wouldn't be many other applicants for the intelligence and analytics track, but Powerloader should have said something about it, right? Had he filled out his application incorrectly? He'd thought he checked it five times, but what if *something* went wrong? Or maybe they'd wanted him to use his intelligence-gathering skills to figure out the exam before he'd arrived?}

"That would be a little much for an entrance exam," Nedzu comments "but would make for an interesting final."

{A vacuum-wrapped packet was placed in front of him and Izuku forced himself to take a deep breath. It was too late to do anything about it now, and he couldn't afford to be worried about his practical exam when he hadn't even started the written one yet. It'd be fine. He could do this.

"Alright, does everyone have your tests?" Powerloader asked. "Begin."}

The screen fades and the theater erupts as people head to the tables for food, take turns using the restrooms, and Headcase directs them to the dorms for a good night's rest. In the morning everyone, with a mixture of excitement and caution, settles into their seats ready for whatever comes next.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

And that’s day 1
Take a break from binge reading and take care of yourself

Deku? Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Training and a test

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

The Recommendation Exam

{"Ok, kid, the recommendation exam is in a little over two months. It takes place about a month before the standard exam so that if a student doesn't make the cut for the recommendation spots, they can still try again with the general population."

Izuku looked up at Eraserhead from where he was stretching on the floor of the gym, "I guess that makes sense. How many spots are open?"

"Normally, four, although I think Nedzu is looking into making another spot this year due to...extenuating circumstances."

Izuku frowned, "You mean because people would get mad if a quirkless kid took one of the recommendation spots."}

"Quirkist bastards!"
"That's fucked!"
"This is why society should fall!"

{Aizawa sighed, but nodded, "It's the world we live in, kid, but we'll deal with it if we have to. For now, we just need to focus on getting you physically ready so you don't die. What training have you done so far?"

Izuku thought for a moment, "Well, I mostly focused on my mental abilities, obviously. Then, when you guys started sending me videos, I realized just how physically fit heroes need to be.

Even if I'd kind of given up by that point, it was still inspiring. I started lifting weights and jogging, I've even tried a little parkour and freerunning, even if I'm not very good at that yet. I'm a lot stronger than I used to be, but," he hugged himself, "I'm still pretty weak. Sorry."}

"Don't worry Deku that's a great start!" Ururaka calls to the screen.

{Aizawa felt his heartbreak. This kid was doing amazing when you considered that everyone had told him it was impossible to even try, but he still had a long way to go, "Alright, I want you to keep doing what you've been doing. We're not going to be able to make a huge difference in strength in just two months, but we can improve your speed and parkour, as well as get you some combat skills." He gestured for Izuku to stand up, "So, Deku, do you know how to fall or how to take a hit?"

"I mean, I've been hit plenty of times before, so I think I know that one."}

"No Green Bean that's not what he means." Ashido cringes.

{Aizawa's expression soured, "That is...not the same thing. I guess that's what we'll start with."

When Izuku went home that night, he was sore and covered in bruises, but couldn't keep the smile off his face. He could do it! He could be a hero! He might not be able to be like All Might, but, the more he thought about it, being an underground hero sounded like more fun anyway.}

"Oh no," Midnight says dramatically, "he said *fun*, Shota's gonna eat him alive."

"I'll let it slide just this once." Aizawa informs.

"Gasp," Mic exclaims "be still my heart, he's going soft."

"The kid needs a break." He defends earning teasing smiles from his co-workers.

{The next two months flew by. Izuku trained with a different pro-hero every day of the week.}

"Sports training montage!~" Kaminari and Ashido sing.

{Eraser taught him hand-to-hand combat, Ms. Joke took him on parkour runs, Mr. Brave helped him with speed… it was amazing.}

"I'm so jealous!" Hagakure exclaims. Agreements echo throughout the theater.

{Izuku felt so much stronger and even if he couldn't hold his own against Eraser yet, he wasn't falling into dumpsters as often as he had when he was doing parkour on his own.}

Snorts and giggles ring through the room.

{The morning of the recommendation exam, Izuku opened his computer to find dozens of good luck messages. Apparently, word had gotten around that Deku was a lot younger than anyone had thought, and they were all excited for him. It was contagious. Not that he wouldn't have been excited without the messages, he still would have been, it's just...he'd probably be a lot more nervous than excited.

Inko waved to Izuku as he left, then let her hand fall as soon as he was out of sight. Her baby is off to go be a hero. As she wiped the tears from her eyes, even she didn't know if they were happy tears or sad ones.}

"You know," Ururaka starts "it's kinda cool your mom's supporting your dream even if she doesn't agree with it."

"Yeah, I'm really lucky that way."

{"You'll have three hours for the written portion of the exam. Begin!"}

"Skip." No one's quite sure who said that.

{Izuku sat in the auditorium with the other students after the written portion. He didn't think he got 100% because he probably got at least a few questions wrong in the English portion, but there had been a hero analysis essay at the end that, while optional, would probably bring up his score. But that wasn't what he was worried about.}

"UA has not yet had a single 100% on its written test." Nedzu informs.

{“Hello, listeners! Rock On! The written part of the recommendation test is over! The three-kilometer, and then, finally, the interview!” Izuku resisted the urge to mutter like a fanboy as the voice hero explained, “This portion will be a three-kilometer obstacle course run in groups of six. We will be looking not only at your times but at your ingenuity and use of your quirks, so please go all out! As you leave the auditorium, please take a number from either Midnight or Snipe, these will determine what group you’ll be in for the race. Any questions? Alright! Let’s go!”}

"What was the obstacle course like Todoroki?" Ururaka asks.

"I'm not sure, I just went over the entire thing." He answers evenly.

"Aw, man." She whines.

{As they slowly filed out of the auditorium, Izuku looked around him and tried to evaluate the quirks of those around him. There were a few obvious mutant quirks, but there were some like a boy with a skull face and another with two-toned hair that weren’t as obvious.}

"Oh look," Ashido cheers "Todoroki's first appearance."

{Some didn’t appear to have physical manifestations of their quirks at all. Izuku tried to calm his breathing. No matter what, he knew that all of them had strong quirks, they wouldn’t have been recommended otherwise, and soon Izuku would have to face them. He counted his blessings that he wouldn’t be facing them in combat. Even with two months of training, he still ended up on his back most of the time and he wasn’t sure he was ready to face people using their quirks quite yet.}

"Don't rush it Green Bean, you're doing great." Midnight assured.

{The first group was called up and went to the starting line. Present Mic nodded to Snipe, who pointed his gun to the sky and fired. The six were off quickly and Izuku felt his stomach sink as he saw their quirks. They were amazing! Izuku couldn’t possibly compete! One boy controlled the wind to blow him forward while leaving his opposition in dust. Another stayed neck and neck with him by skating on ice that he shot from his foot. To Izuku, it seemed like the race was over before it even began, with the wind user finishing just barely ahead of the ice guy. Even Present Mic seemed shocked.}

"Those kids seriously went Plus Ultra that day." Mic comments.

"Who would have thought," Midnight asked sarcastically "the children and proteges of Pro Heroes would be intense?"

"I would hope those exposed to heroics, real heroics, would take it more seriously." Aizawa informs.

{He forced himself to pay attention as the next group ran the course, thankfully much slower since this group didn't have anyone with quirks that allowed them to completely ignore all the obstacles. They all used their quirks creatively and Izuku tried not to think about what everyone else would think when he didn't use a quirk at all during the exam.}

"You have few options here," Dabi starts voice dripping with sarcasm. "You could ignore them, you could appease the Little shits," he starts rubbing his hands together "or better yet, you could fuck 'em up."

{"Hey, are you ok?" Izuku jerked up to see a girl with a high ponytail looking at him with concern, "You were breathing kind of fast."}

"Yaomomo!" Her friends cheer.

{"Uhh...yeah," Izuku said, "I guess I'm just kinda nervous. Everyone here has such amazing quirks."

The girl laughed, "Yeah, I guess so. My name is Momo Yaoyorozu. You?"

"Izuku Midoriya."

"Nice to meet you Midoriya. My group's next, wish me luck."}

"The queen has spoken!" Ashido calls out.

"And the cinnamon roll has replied!" Hagakure answers back.

{Izuku nodded as she left and went to the starting line. This time he watched carefully to see how everyone used their quirks to make it past the obstacles. Yaoyorozu apparently had some sort of creation quirk because she pulled a pair of roller blades from nowhere to breeze past the flat sections and made a spring-loaded grappling hook to fly up the cliff. Another used her oil secretion quirk to slide more quickly down the slide and make the track

slicker for the other examinees.}

"Oh!" Midoriya cried out. "He could..."

"Please Midoriya," Headcase interrupts "No spoilers."

Izuku grins brightly as he bounces up and down in his seat in excitement.

{With each group that went, Izuku got more and more ideas on how to pass the obstacles and he got more and more excited. He even saw opportunities where students were underutilizing their quirks and got ideas to help them improve. Yeah, he couldn't replicate any of their quirks, but he could take the best ideas from all of them and get a decent time.}

"Golden Boy's practically vibrating in his seat," Shigi gripes "it's distracting."

{Finally, it was Izuku's turn to be called and he took a deep breath as he walked to the starting line. He bounced on his toes as ideas bounced around his mind on how to clear the obstacles. The moment Snipe's gun went off, he ran toward the first obstacle, which looked like the first hill of a roller coaster. Other students were already starting to climb up the side as Izuku reached the base of it and looked around. He smiled as he grabbed a small board from the base and tucked it inside his shirt, then started climbing up toward the apex.}

"Why would he pick up that board?" Ururaka asked turning to Izuku.

Izuku looks at her, goes to answer, changes his mind, and decides to warn the theater instead, stands up and says "I apologize on behalf of my other self for the heart attack your all about to receive." As the theater erupts he simply turns back to the screen, shouting "No spoilers!" Much to the dismay of all present.

"What does that mean!?"
"What's he gonna do!?"
"Problem Child!"
"Young Midoriya!"

{Most of the students were climbing straight across, rather than up, and they were already on the second half, while some had already cleared the obstacle. Izuku hoped this gamble would pay off and that Eraser wouldn't kill him if he fell before he pulled

himself up to stand on top of the wooden structure. He pulled out the board he'd brought and set it on the thin metal track that lined the top,}

"Oh God no!"
"Please don't!"
"That's what he meant!?"

{then carefully stood on top of it as if it was a skateboard, pinwheeling his arms as he almost lost his balance. With a quick prayer, he shoved off and began to slide down the hill, rocketing past the two students who were still climbing, putting him in fourth place.}

"He actually did it!"
"Don't fall!"
"Please be okay!"

{He hit the ground with a roll when he reached the end of the track and looked at the next obstacle, which involved hopping from different-sized pillars that ascended up to a thin wall. Unfortunately, there wasn't anything he could do to speed this up, but he was grateful for his parkour training as he jumped easily, maintaining his place in the running.}

"Alright!"
"He made it!"
"You got this!"

{The next obstacle was a thin cement wall about the width of a balance beam that students were running across. Izuku stood in shock for a moment as he watched the second-place examinee, a blue-haired boy with engines in his legs, literally glide across the wall on his heels. Was he related to Ingenium? Izuku shook his head and started running.}

"IIDA!" Echoed through the audience.

"You never told us you took the recommendation exam." Ururaka turned to him.

"I didn't think it was relevant," he informed "after all, I didn't get in that way."

"That's fair."

{The next obstacle wasn't so much of an obstacle as a slide that dumped into a pool of water. Izuku thought back to the engine boy who had been gliding on his heels. If he could reduce the surface that touched the slide, he could reduce friction and move faster! He also remembered the girl with the oil quirk from a few rounds before and looked quickly... *there.* A line on the left half of the slide was slightly shinier than the rest from where she had made it slicker. Izuku laid down and pushed off, lifting his body so that only his heels and shoulders were touching the slide. The decreased friction combined with the oil and he managed to pass another examinee, putting him in third place.}

"Get it!"
"Slay 'em!"
"Hell yeah!"

{He swam quickly toward the next obstacle, a cliff face that went straight up. He didn't have a grappling hook like Yaoyorozu did, but he had seen her drop it when she'd cleared, the cliff. He took a deep breath and dived. Sure enough, there it was, sitting at the bottom of the pool. He grabbed it and pulled himself up onto the ledge at the bottom of the cliff. He took a moment to familiarize himself with his new tool, then looked up. The obstacle after the cliff climb was a rope strung across two spires, then climbing down the second spire to arrive at the top of a plateau. Izuku thought for a moment before aiming. Hopefully, he wouldn't be penalized for this.}

"Is that cheating?"
"No, it's creative."

{He smiled as he felt it catch, then braced himself and pressed the button to retract it. He was yanked from his location, flew past both the cliff climb and the rope bridge, and hit the side of the plateau. Hard.}

Sharp inhales hiss through the audience.

{Izuku groaned as he pulled himself up and took note of where the other students were. He was now in second place.}

"Keep going!"
"Don't slow down!"
"One more!"

{He couldn't see the first place examinee, but he'd seen all

previous examinees disappear for a minute before reemerging from the waterfall, so he assumed there was some sort of cave. He paused as he saw a narrow fissure in the middle of the plateau with rock-climbing holds on both sides going down. The gap was only about four feet wide in most areas, and Izuku was just over five feet tall so… he nodded resolutely, then braced himself with an arm and a leg on either side of the fissure and shimmied down as quickly as he could.}

"Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle~" Kaminari sang as quietly as he could causing Ashido to giggle and Sero to snort.

{At the bottom of the fissure was a short tunnel that Izuku would have to army crawl through and the first examinee had just entered it. Thankfully, the tunnel was wide enough for multiple people. Izuku got down on his stomach and moved as quickly as he could, passing the first-place examinee at the very end of the tunnel.}

"Woo!"
"First place!"
"Almost there!"

{There was a waterfall in front of them and Izuku ran straight toward it without pausing. He'd seen plenty of others run out of the waterfall in the previous rounds. The water was cold and almost knocked him over, but he kept running until he could breathe again.}

"Come on!"
"Let's go!"
"You got this!"

But Mini-Ingenium was too fast on a straight-away and he zoomed past Izuku,}

"Damn it!"
"So close!"

{_who crossed the finish line a full five seconds after. Gasping for breath and fighting tears. Second place. Good, but not good enough. He needed to be the best if he was going to prove that a quirkless student belonged in the hero course.}

"You were 5 seconds behind someone with a god-damned *speed* quirk," Ururaka shouted at the screen "you're a certified badass!" Izuku covers

his face in embarrassment.

{“Hey, Midoriya!” Yaoyorozu was at his side, “That was amazing! I hadn’t even considered that anyone else would try to use my grappling hook! I wish I’d thought to bypass an obstacle like that!”

“That was shameful!” Mini-Ingenium cried, chopping his hands through the air, “You are supposed to use your own quirk! Not coast by on the work of others!”}

"Oh, I see it now," Iida remarks "this is why Bakugo says I 'have a stick up my ass' isn't it."

"You've gotten much better." Izuku comforts.

{Izuku felt his heart sink. Mini,-Ingenium was right, he wouldn’t have done half as well if he hadn’t paid attention to the other rounds and used them to his advantage. He really was worthless, wasn’t he? Why did he think he deserved this?}

"No!"
"He was doing so well!"
"You're not worthless!"

{“Hey now, listener, don’t be so hard on him!” Present Mic interrupted, “We told everyone to go all out and this examinee showed great creativity and used the environment to his advantage, an essential trait for any hero. Not everyone has physical quirks, ya know?”}

"You tell him!"
"Yay, Mic-sensei!"
"Exactly!"

{Mini-Ingenium straightened, “My apologies.” He bowed to Midoriya, “I see that I was in the wrong. On further consideration, it really was truly impressive how you managed to get ahead of the other examinees. My name is Tenya Iida, what is yours?”

Izuku’s eyes widened. He didn’t think anyone had ever apologized to him before, “I-izuku M-midoriya!” he stuttered out, “Nice to meet you!”}

"He's never been apologized to?"

"What the fuck!?"
"How is this kid so nice!?"

{Mini-Ingenium, Iida, smiled, “It is a pleasure to meet you as well!”

“All right!” Present Mic Yelled, “Now don’t get too down if you didn’t get first in the obstacle courses. We’ll be deciding who gets the recommendation spots based on a combination of the written, physical, and interview! So if you did poorly, don’t lose hope! And if you did well, don’t get too comfortable! Now go! Get to the locker rooms and get cleaned up! Interviews will be in Principal Nedzu’s office in 30 minutes. Don’t be late!”}

The screen fades as everyone chats excitedly about the races they just saw. Eager to continue and wary of what's to come the theater settles as the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Mastermind chapter 5

Chapter Summary

The shopping list

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

First Meetings

{It had been a week since Giran started following him and Izuku was beginning to get frustrated. The guy was supposedly one of the best brokers in the underground and was obviously good enough to find him, so one week should be more than enough time for him to confirm his suspicions. Izuku knew that he didn't really look the part of a villain, because what criminal mastermind lets himself be bullied every day, but *come on.*}

"Giran is cautious when it comes to vetting talent." Dabi gripes.

"Seriously getting into the League was harder than it needed to be." Toga whines.

"Excuse me for not wanting to get *stabbed* again." Shigiraki croaks.

"Toga tried." Dabi smirks.

"And failed." Shigi snapped. Himiko giggled as the boys continued to bicker.

{It was with these thoughts that Izuku decided to deviate from his normal daily routine, a routine that Giran *should* be familiar with at this point if he was paying any attention. Hopefully, his annoying stalker would come out of the woodwork if given a good enough opportunity. If not, Izuku might just walk right up to the guy and punch him in the face. *Actually*, he winced as he

thought back to his inability to fight against his bullies, *probably not.*}

"How often do you think about punching people?" Todoroki asks.

"I plead the fifth." Izuku replies evenly.

"We're Japanese."

Izuku turns to him, looks him in the eye, and repeats. "I plead the fifth."

{Izuku wound his way through the city, heading in the opposite direction from Dagobah beach. It was a part of the city that he was only familiar with through maps, meaning that there wouldn't be anyone there who would recognize him, and it was a medium-better part of town, meaning that, with any luck, there wouldn't be anyone there who would recognize Giran either. It is a nice, neutral territory for a first meeting.}

"Damnit, a meeting with a broker is going to give him a greater foothold in the villain world." Tsukauchi groans.

{The cafe Izuku walked into had good reviews, but he honestly didn't care about how good their coffee was. What Izuku cared about was that it was busy this time of day, which meant there was enough ambient noise that he and Giran would be able to talk without being overheard, and there was the added bonus that no one would be suspicious over two strangers sharing a table. Izuku walked up to the counter and gave his order. Now all that was left was for his stalker to take the bait.}

"And another random cafe making them both hard to track." Aizawa gripes.

{It didn't take long at all for Giran to enter the cafe, at least considering how long he'd stubbornly insisted on following Izuku. If he'd taken any longer, Izuku was considering messaging the guy to just come inside. The boy watched the broker wait in line out of the corner of his eye, chuckling when he noticed that Giran had even put out his ever-present cigarette. He was halfway through his coffee when Giran slid into the seat across from him.

"I was wondering if you were ever going to actually talk to me."

A look of shock briefly crossed the broker's face before he let out

a surprised laugh.</p>

“You knew I was following you.”}

"No shit Sherlock!" Bakugo growled.

{“I make a living being more observant than most people. Of course I knew.” Izuku took another sip of his coffee, “What I don’t know is why you insisted on observing for a full week before coming to talk to me. You must have had pretty good intel on who I was, watching my daily routine wasn’t going to change that.”

Giran chuckled and shook his head, “Well it took me a week to be sure I had the right guy, and even now you’re sitting here confirming it and I’m still not sure.”

Izuku hummed, “Yeah, I guess my whole weak and innocent act does tend to throw people off. If it almost fooled you, then just imagine what the heroes will be thinking when they have their pride on the line.”}

Midnight cringed "I hate that he's not wrong."

"Maybe for daylights but undergrounds know to look deeper." Aizawa corrects.

"But the bullied, quirkless kid?" Mic countered "Let's be honest, even you are gonna have problems with this one."

{Giran smiled, “Now there’s the ruthless Mastermind we know and love. You’ve been doing pretty well for yourself online from what I’ve heard, but you know that you’re not going to be able to hide in the shadows forever, right?”

Izuku sighed and put down his cup, “Yeah, the copycats are already starting to get on my nerves.” He reached into his bag and pulled out a folder, sliding it across the table, “That’s why I need your help. You are the best at what you do, right?”}

"You would show up with a shopping list." Ururaka comments.

"How else is he supposed to test the broker?" Izuku replies.

{Giran raised his eyebrows as he took the folder and began looking through it. There was a design for a villain costume and a

list of weapons that Izuku thought he'd need, including a lot of knives. The broker looked over the designs silently for a few minutes, then nodded.

"This should be doable, but I should warn you that this'll cost you a pretty penny, the weapons especially."

"You know what my rates are Giran. I can afford it. Plus I'll even let you introduce me to a few of the contacts you've been hounding me about."

Giran smiled, "You sure know how to tell a man what he wants to hear. I'll start calling around. But you'll be packing some serious heat." Giran pulled out the weapons list and placed it in front of Izuku, "Are you sure you know how to use all these?"

Izuku shook his head, "Not yet. That's actually the last thing I need your help with."

Giran cocked his eyebrow, still smiling, and gestured for him to continue.

"I want to meet Himiko Toga."}

"I GET TO MEET HIM FIRST!" Toga screeched in excitement. "Pay up bitches!" The boys grumble as they hand over their pocket change and immediately start betting on who meets him next.

{That wiped the smile off the broker's face, "The serial killer?!" He asked in shock. Izuku nodded.

"You've followed me so I trust you know about my...quirk situation…" Giran nodded hesitantly, "Well, since I don't have a quirk to fall back on, I'm going to have to rely primarily on weapons. Knives are the best option for both close combat and ranged, once you factor in throwing knives, and there's no one better than Toga when it comes to knives. I want her to teach me how to fight."}

"I'm gonna teach him." Toga bounces in her seat.

"Your knife skills and his strategies..." Shigiraki muses.

"He gonna fuck shit up!" Dabi grins.

"This is gonna be amazing!" "We're so fucked!"

{Giran was solemn now, “I hate to ask it, but what if she kills you?”

Izuku just smiled, wondering if it made him just a little bit crazy that he was asking to be trained by a serial killer, “I think I can hold my own. Besides, you won’t let her kill me, I’ll be making you too much money.”}

"He's seriously about to learn from a serial killer." Kaminari squeaked.

"And he's *smiling*," Ashido whines "make it stop."

{Izuku started to get up to leave, but Giran grabbed his arm.

“Before you leave, I have a gift for you.” He grabbed a laptop bag from the floor and put it on the table, “This is top of the line, virtually untraceable. Internet cafes are great and all, but I think you’ll agree this is the easier option.” Izuku booted up the computer and looked it over. It was nice and really would make his work much easier. He quickly checked to make sure there weren’t any tracking apps or spyware installed before closing it. Meanwhile, Giran pulled out a simple smartphone, “This is also untraceable. I already have the number and put my contact info in as well. I’ll text you an address when your gear is ready and you can pick it up. I’ll also text you when I manage to get ahold of Toga. She’s slippery, but shouldn’t be too hard to find. I’ll be honest, I really hope you know what you’re doing.”}

"And there goes the cafe lead." Tsukauchi gripes.

"We will find another way we always do." Nedzu comforts.

{Izuku just tucked the phone in his pocket and slung the laptop bag over his shoulder as he stood and grabbed his cup, “If I didn’t, I wouldn’t have chosen to call myself Mastermind.”

Giran watched the boy leave. *This kid is crazy,* his smile turned greedy, *look out heroes...*

Mastermind is here to stay.}

As the screen fades discussions surrounding Mastermind becoming a knife-wielding maniac can be heard throughout the theater. The villains excitedly bet on when and how they would meet him. The heroes throw out capture methods. The students wonder if they will lose someone close to them in the world they're watching. If only they

knew.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

If you have recommendations please post them to the "what could have been" one shot.

Viridian Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Publicity

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Fame

{Shota tightened his capture weapon and pushed the villain more firmly against the wall, “It’s illogical to resist, just tell me what I need to know.”

“Dude, it’s just some drugs!” The villain said. “If you have a problem with that then maybe you should get out more, I’ve got a couple samples that’d be good for a first-timer.”}

"How often does that happen?" Kaminari asks turning to the teachers.

"Every 4 to 6 dealers." Aizawa deadpans.

{Shota rolled his eyes, “Yes, offer to sell drugs to the hero that’s arresting you. And honestly, if it were just party drugs, I probably *wouldn’t* care that much, but this is Trigger, so I’ll ask you one more time, where do you get the drugs.”

“Fuck you!”

Shota sighed, “Fine, have it your way.” He dialed Tsukauchi and waited until the detective’s half-awake voice groaned over the line. “Could you send a car? I’ve got a perp to bring in for processing and interrogation.”}

"Are we gonna see the cops' side of this one?" Kaminari asks.

"That's the best part of criminal stories!" Ashido cheers.

"Dude," Sero chimes in "that probably means we'll see the cops' side of Mastermind's world."

"The suspense!" Ashido chirps.

{Tsukauchi looked up from his paperwork as Eraser walked in the villain he'd just arrested. The guy was probably a low-level dealer like the others that Eraser had brought in, but there was always the hope that the next villain would know who was behind Trigger.

"Interrogation room eight is open, Eraser. You can put him in there."

Eraser grunted in acknowledgment and dragged the thug toward the back of the station as Tsukauchi poured them both some coffee. He'd have to go interrogate the guy later since he was one of the detectives on the Trigger investigation, but that could wait a bit until this paperwork was done. Leaving the perps to wait for a few minutes helped establish control of the situation anyway.}

"We get to learn some police procedures!" Izuku chirps.

"Why are you excited by that?" Todoroki asks.

"Because as heroes we'll have to work closely with the police." Midoriya informs.

"Especially any organized crime cases." Iida adds.

{Shota finally sat down on the other side of his desk and grabbed the coffee, then grimaced, "Tsukauchi, you didn't mention that the station had switched out their coffee for paint thinner."}

Snickers echo through the theater.

{Tsukauchi just laughed, "Oh, you're just mad that Musutafu doesn't have your favorite cat cafe."}

"Aizawa goes to cat cafes?" Kaminari wonders aloud.

"He's grouchy, likes to trick us, and it's constantly taking naps," Bakugo snarks "he *is* a cat."

{"What can I say, the Hotta brothers make a mean cup of coffee." Shota shrugged. "You got those forms? I want to get this over

with as fast as possible."

Tsukauchi shook his head, but grabbed the villain intake form from the drawer at his right and handed it to Shota, who started to fill it out with both annoyance and boredom. Paperwork wasn't *fun* by any means, and Shota would rather be patrolling the streets looking for more info for the Trigger investigation, but bureaucracy was a part of life, so he had to put up with it.}

"That's not a part of heroics I'm looking forward to." Kaminari gripes loudly. His fellow students voice their agreement. The teachers and Pros go on about necessary evils.

{They kept working in companionable silence for a few minutes until the doors to the station flew open again and Amplifier came bounding in with a villain in tow and took him straight to the holding cell.

"Why is she so loud?" Shota grumbled.

Tsukauchi raised an eyebrow, "She hasn't even said anything yet."}

Snort

{"Exactly. Even her presence is loud enough to draw attention, it's annoying."

"Oh don't be a spoilsport Eraser." Amplifier grinned as she grabbed a chair to sit beside him. "You're just mad because you wouldn't be noticed by a rat."}

"That's on purpose." Aizawa grumbles.

{"That's intentional, you know." Shota said as Tsukauchi handed Amplifier the villain intake form. "People don't notice me unless I *want* them to notice me."}

"See." Aizawa snarks as Ms. Joke laughs.

{"Maybe that's why you haven't run into our little vigilante guide yet." Amplifier said. "He just doesn't know you exist."

Shota rolled his eyes, "I think it's much more likely that UA is out of his comfort zone, and since I always stick to that area unless I'm following a lead, we just haven't had a chance to run into

each other yet.”}

"That makes sense." Ururaka comments.

{“Sure,” Amplifier grinned, “whatever you say Eraser.”

“Was that villain one of the Green Guide’s?” Tsukauchi asked.

“That depends on your definition.” Amplifier said. “If you mean, did he lead me to the guy, then yes, but if you mean did he take the guy down himself, then no.”

Shota frowned, “I thought the Green Guide didn’t ever take down villains on his own.”}

"And yet, he did." Aizawa gripes.

{Tsukauchi sighed, “He didn’t, at least until last night when we responded to a call about an attempted assault, only to find the perp already knocked out and tied up with pieces of an old T-shirt. The victim said the guy who did it was a kid in a green hoodie and goggles.”

Shota rubbed his temples to try and ease the coming headache. This problem child was going to be the death of him. “How? From what you told me, the kid is skin and bones, how did he take down an actual villain?”}

"He hasn't even met Viridian and he's already calling him Problem Child." Midoriya whines as his friends pat his back in comfort.

{“With a tin can.”

Shota stopped and stared at Tsukauchi, he *had* to have heard that wong, “...What?”}

"God Sho," Mic Snickers "you look so done."

"I watched that fight and part of me still can't believe it." Aizawa defends.

"Can't really blame him." Midnight comments.

{Tsukauchi nodded, “You heard me right. According to the victim, the Green Guide started fighting the guy, but couldn’t get the upper hand until he grabbed a can of beans and started beating the guy with it like it was a pair of improvised brass

knuckles. It was pretty brutal, but also effective."

Shota didn't know whether to be proud of the kid for his quick thinking under pressure or angry because he ran straight into danger. Probably both.}

"Story of my life." Izuku snarks.

"This wouldn't happen if you didn't jump into fights unprepared." Iida replies to which Izuku turns to him with a look that says *really*.

{"Ahh!" Amplifier squealed. "Our little boy is growing up! Taking down villains all by himself and everything!"

Shota scowled, "I don't think that's a good thing."

"Yeah, I think I have to agree with Eraser on this one." Tsukauchi said. "The victim said that he seemed in over his head. I'd much rather he kept running to get heroes rather than running into fights he's unprepared for."}

"Now that's just wishful thinking." Aizawa remarks.

{"Oh, come on!" Amplifier groaned. "You guys gotta admit that beating a criminal with nothing more than your wits and a tin can is pretty impressive."

Shota just shot her an unimpressed look, "Nothing more than wits, a tin can, *and* a probable speed quirk."}

"That's a theory." Todoroki remarks.

"You know that's not true." Izuku deadpans.

"You don't want to know what they think Viridian might have?"

Izuku pauses for a moment before breaking into a mischievous grin "This is gonna be fun."

{"Come on!"

Shota sighed, "Fine, I'll admit that he's quick-witted and definitely good at using improvised weapons, but the kid obviously lacks the required training. I don't want him getting in fights if he's just gonna get himself killed."}

"Aw," Ashido gushes "he does care."

{“Well, Crawler and Pop Step didn’t have any formal training either when they first started out.” Tsukauchi pointed out.

“That may be true, but they also had Knuckleduster to mentor them and get them out of any tough scrapes.” Shota argued. “The Green Guide doesn’t even have that.”

“Well then maybe you should fill that role.” Amplifier grinned.

Shota glared at her, “I have enough brats to worry about at UA, thanks. I don’t need to add teaching a wannabe on top of that.”}

"You jinxed it, he's your problem now." Mic comments.

"Just face it." Midnight teases.

{Amplifier shrugged, “Just a thought, Eraser, considering how protective you are of a kid you’ve never even met. Oh, and about the kid’s name, I don’t think he’s going by Green Guide anymore.”

Tsukauchi furrowed his brow in keywords, “What? Why change it?”

Amplifier looked between the two of them in shock, “Did you guys not see the article this morning?”

They shook their heads and Amplifier smiled and got out her phone, “Apparently the woman he saved last night is a reporter. Since he didn’t give her a vigilante name to call him, she’s named him Viridian. Kinda catchy, right?”

Tsukauchi frowned, “How did I not see this?”}

"Screwed up the key words like the dumbass you are." Dabi snarks.

{Amplifier shrugged, “Probably because the keywords were wrong. You’ve most likely got your computer set up to ping you if the news mentions a *Green Guide,* but because this reporter used a different name, it didn’t trip your system. I like Viridian better anyway.”

“It *is* easier to say…”

“Vigilantes gaining public notoriety is never a good thing.” Shota grumbled. “It goes straight to their heads and they end up putting themselves in even more danger to impress their *fans*.” He sighed. “The kid is probably soaking up his fame as we speak.”}

"And that's where you're wrong Eraserhead!" Midoriya calls out.

"What do you mean Problem Child?" Aizawa asks.

"You'll see."

{Izuku was freaking out.}

"See."

{He couldn't get that article out of his head, even as he ran around the streets leading heroes to crimes. When Izuku had seen the article on his way home from school, he'd had to fight off a panic attack and he almost hadn't gone out that night. He didn't *want* to be famous. The more people paid attention to him, the more likely it was that they'd figure out that he was quirkless and the faster he could say goodbye to any positive reputation he'd gained. He wasn't even *technically* a vigilante, so why did he have to have a name?}

"Because no one knows you aren't a vigilante!" Hagakure giggles.

{But apparently that woman he'd saved was a reporter? So she'd written about how he'd taken down the villain and she'd apparently done some digging to see that he normally stayed out of the fights himself. Izuku didn't deserve to have articles written about him like the heroes did, so he couldn't help feeling like he'd tricked that reporter somehow. He hadn't been trying to fool her into thinking that he wasn't worthless, but that's apparently what happened since her article was so positive. He'd just been trying to help her.}

"You're good!"
"You didn't trick her!"
"Poor thing!"

{Which was ultimately why he was out on the streets again tonight. Sure, he wasn't necessarily *happy* about the article, but he also wasn't about to let that stop him from helping people either. And he was helping people! He was helping the heroes find the people that needed saving! He was doing *good*!}

"That's right!"
"So good!"
"We love you!"

{But he should probably start carrying weapons if he ever planned to jump into a fight again. Between tending to his injuries and everything with the article, he'd completely forgotten about adding weapons to his costume that afternoon, but it wasn't a big deal. He was still covered in scrapes and bruises from his fight with Moleman last night, so it wouldn't be a good idea to get into any more fights so soon, so he didn't need the weapons quite yet, but it was still a good thing to brainstorm.}

"At least he's pacing himself." Aizawa sighs.

{He'd almost considered getting a baseball bat, but there were a couple of problems with that. While it *would* be a useful bludgeon-type weapon, it was too bulky. He wouldn't be able to easily run if he had to be constantly hefting the bat, so it would actually prevent him from saving people, which was the exact opposite of what he wanted. Not to mention the fact that he'd never been into any sports, so if he came home with a baseball bat, Mom would ask way too many questions that Izuku really didn't want to answer.}

"Deku, what are you doing?" Ururaka asks seeing a strange look on Midoriya's face.

Izuku blushes and with a sheepish smile replies "Trying to come up with a reason to have a bat that he could tell mom." This causes her to giggle into her hand.

"Any luck?"

"Not in the slightest."

{His weapons would need to be small. He needed to be able to fit them in his pockets so he could run easily and so he could go incognito if he needed to, so that meant that anything like a staff was out. Maybe a…

He heard someone calling for help and peeked in on the situation before running off to get a hero. He could worry about what weapons he needed later.

For now, though, Izuku had people to save.}

The screen fades as the groups gather snacks and go over notes on the separate worlds. They must have been taking too long as Mei calls out "SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP, I'M IN THE NEXT ONE!" Everyone quickly

returns to their seats so as not to anger the crazy support student.

Now Playing

Cheat Code Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Essays

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Test Taking Skills

{Izuku didn't think that tests were normally supposed to be fun, and while his test anxiety definitely *wasn't,* he found himself forgetting to be nervous the more questions he answered. Even though the questions for the general section weren't extremely interesting, since they only covered the standard subjects he'd learned in middle school, they were challenging enough to make up for it. Izuku was glad that he'd studied in preparation for the test because that meant that instead of being intimidating, the more difficult questions were actually *invigorating.*}

"He actually enjoys taking tests!?" Kaminari asks in abject horror.

"He's a damn nerd of course he likes taking tests!" Bakugo snaps back.

"Are we really gonna watch him take the *whole* test?" Ashido whines.

"I mean," Sero starts "he *is* doing intelligence stuff so it makes sense."

"I guess." She grumbles.

{And then came the support section. Izuku assumed that part of its purpose was to gauge each student's potential for the other tracks because the questions were pulled from all three. Izuku felt like he did decently well on the design questions, even if that wasn't exactly his passion, but the only questions about inventions that he could even make sense of were the ones that dealt with computer hardware. Maybe he should have studied

mechanics a little more? Oh well, it was too late for that now....}

"The lack of knowledge for one track will not in any way be held against him." Nedzu comments.

{To Izuku's surprise, there were only two questions about analysis and both of them were essays, so he could only hope that would be enough to show his skills and set him apart from the other applicants.}

Nedzu suppresses a chuckle. No spoilers.

{He didn't want to have to think about what he'd do if his new dream got crushed like his last one had been.}

"I want to hug him so bad!" Hagakure exclaims.

{For the first analysis question, he was given a quirk registration form and told to theorize about the strengths and weaknesses of the quirk, as well as give suggestions about how to use it. To his surprise, he actually recognized the quirk! It belonged to a retired hero named Glimmer who could manipulate light energy around her body in the form of sparkles.}

"I don't recognize that hero." Izuku says eyebrows furrowed.

"Really?" Ururaka asks, at his nod she waves down Headcase. "Our Deku doesn't recognize her did she not become a hero in our world?"

"I'm not even sure she exists in your world. If she does she might be younger or older, maybe even a part of a different generation."

"That's so cool!" Izuku and Ochako cheered together.

{At first, it didn't seem like a very powerful quirk, but Izuku knew better. The sparkles that Glimmer controlled didn't just look pretty, they could get bright enough that looking at them was like staring into the sun. Tempting, sure, but definitely not recommended. As a pro hero, she had used it to blind and disorient her opponents, leading to a high rate of capture.}

"So she's probably a combat hero with a focus on distraction." Izuku mumbles as he writes in his notebook.

{The drawbacks, of course, were that if Gimmer wasn't careful she could permanently blind villains, bystanders, or even herself.

She had to carefully manipulate the light of her quirk to make sure that it was bright enough to be effective without causing permanent damage, which was a pretty fine line. She wasn't a well-known hero, but from what Izuku knew about her, she had done her job well.}

"That sounds so tricky." Kirishima comments.

"As someone who has to carefully manage the strength of her acid, I can imagine." Ashido replies off-handedly.

{All of that was common knowledge, though, if someone knew where to look, so while it was necessary to list that out, Izuku didn't think that a basic level of analysis would help him stand out. But what else...well, he was supposed to give suggestions, right? It felt kind of blasphemous to give suggestions to such a successful pro hero, but Izuku forced himself to look at it like it was any other quirk. The test hadn't actually *specified* that the quirk belonged to a pro, after all, so he couldn't let that hold back his analysis, not to mention that if he was accepted into the support course, he'd be giving pros suggestions for a living.}

"Oh God!" Izuku jolts.

"What's wrong?!" Ururaka turns quickly.

"I just imagined a life of *criticizing* heros." He replies looking pale. His friends giggle and huff in amusement turning back to the screen.

{So how could the quirk go beyond what Glimmer had used it for?

Well, she manipulated light energy, right? But...Izuku's eyes widened and he started writing the ideas as fast as he could structure them. Not all light was visible, so what if she could manipulate not only the *intensity* of the lights but also the *wavelength*? From the footage he'd seen, some of the sparkles Glimmer had used had appeared colorful, especially that one time she'd produced rainbow sparkles during a pride parade, so it was definitely possible for her to shift the wavelength within the visible spectrum. And if she could do that much, she could probably train enough to create ultraviolet light and infrared light, which meant that she could use her quirk to burn rather than blind and maybe even use it like a black light to find forensic evidence at crime scenes!}

As the on-screen Midoriya continued his analysis Nedzu's grin widens as the teachers shiver in cautious curiosity as to what this world might hold.

{In the end, Izuku's essay ended up being three pages long, two of which were entirely suggestions based on his theory that Glimmer could manipulate the wavelength of light. It really made him wonder why she'd never used it that way. It would have effectively negated a lot of the drawbacks of her quirk since she wouldn't have had to worry about blinding anyone if her light was invisible. It would also make her much more difficult to fight since the threats wouldn't be as obvious. It was almost a shame that she had already retired because Izuku would have loved to see if any of his theories were actually useful.}

"One million!" Mei turns to him.

"Yes?" Izuku questions nervously.

"You gotta show me your notes on your classmates so I can make them some sweet babies!"

"I-um, maybe?" He rubs the back of his neck "I'll think about it." Mei pouts slightly at his hesitance but turns back to the screen regardless.

{He didn't recognize the other quirk, so he didn't have the advantage of previous knowledge, but then again, he also didn't go into the analysis with any biases, so it all balanced out. It was some sort of jet quirk that allowed the user to blow air out of the bottoms of their feet,}

"Gran Torino!" Izuku calls out as the old man in question smirks.

{_which would probably be most useful for speed or maybe even for flight, depending on how long the hero could keep continuously blowing air. They would need specialized shoes that protected their feet while still allowing the air to flow, and the rest of their costume might need extra ventilation as well, depending on where the air came from. It was probable that the quirk actually worked by taking air in through the skin to power the quirk, or maybe it was powered by the breath?}

Midoriya turns to Gran hoping he would finally answer some questions, at which he gets "not a chance" in response, turning back to the screen in disappointment.

{If the hero could manipulate the temperature of the air, that opened a whole new field of opportunities. He could use hot air to make himself rise faster, or cool air to help victims during fire rescues! There were just so many possibilities, but Izuku limited those speculations to less than a page. He didn't know if temperature manipulation was actually within the limits of the quirk, so he didn't want to waste too much time on suggestions that might not actually be useful. Instead, Izuku tried to focus his analysis on ideas that were possible with only the information he'd been given. Beyond mobility, the quirk could probably be used to impair an opponent's vision, since if the hero could aim the jets at a villain's eyes, it would dry them out pretty quickly. It would be difficult to keep one's eyes open in a targeted windstorm, but even a brief puff to the face would force the villain to blink, which could make him a perfect counter to Eraserhead if he came up on him from behind.}

"Problem Child." Aizawa grabs his attention. "Do you pit heroes against each other in all your analysis?"

"Not all the time." He smiles sheepishly.

{Izuku debated about whether he should actually include that tidbit before deciding to just leave it in. It probably wasn't necessary, but at the same time, any little bit of information could mean the difference between being accepted to his dream school or having to find a third dream in under a year, so Izuku didn't want to take any chances. It couldn't hurt, right? Unless they thought it was creepy. What if they thought he was creepy? But then again, the entire analysis section *was* kinda creepy, just by the way it was designed...but what if his classmates were right and his notebooks weren't useful at all and he made UA hate him because he saw too many weaknesses in the quirks they gave him?}

"Better an ally than an enemy." Nedzu comments.

{Izuku hurried and finished the essay before he could work himself into a panic about it and used the rest of the time to check his answers in the general section as a way to distract himself. He was already here, at UA, taking the entrance exam, so it was way too late to second-guess himself now, right? And maybe UA would be like Mei, who didn't think he was creepy at all, but maybe that was because Mei was a little creepy herself?}

"And proud of it!" Mei cheers.

{By the time Powerloader announced the end of the test, Izuku had successfully talked himself down from his anxiety attack. Ectoplasm must be one of the teachers at UA because it was his clones that came to collect everyone's tests once the time was called. It was kind of surreal that there were so many real pro-heroes in the building right now. Izuku hoped that, if he actually got into UA, he'd be able to reign iIzu-Kunnner fanboy enough to not make a fool of himself around every single one of the teachers. Oh boy, yeah, that was gonna be difficult.}

"Knowing what a fanboy you are" Ururaka starts "really explains some things about the start of the year."

"Yeah, it was a challenge."

{As soon as Ectoplasm grabbed her test, Mei was immediately back in Izuku's personal space, grinning like a mad woman, "How did you do Izu-Kun? I bet those analysis questions were a piece of cake for you, huh? I could make so many babies to help those heroes, it's amazing! I already have so many ideas! Maybe that's what I'll build in the practical, but I have so many other baby ideas too...oooh, this is gonna be so much fun!"

Izuku couldn't help smiling as Mei cackled, even if the other examinees were shooting them strange looks, but her ramblings reminded him that he *still* didn't know what his practical exam was going to be. Analysts didn't have anything physical to show off, unlike inventors and designers, so what were they going to ask him to do? And why didn't Powerloader mention it along with the others?

After a few minutes, they were excused to make their way to the practical exams and there was a flurry of movement as all the examinees stretched and gathered their things to leave the room.

Izuku turned to Mei and smiled, "Good luck with your practical, Mei-chan! I hope you make it in."

"My babies are amazing, the proctors won't be able to ignore them!" Mei declared confidently. "And you're not allowed to fail, either, Izu-Kun. You have to make it into UA so we can make awesome babies together!"}

"Do you know how that sounds?" Iida asks Mei.

She turns to him with a subdued smile and confused eyes saying "What do you mean?"

He debated explaining it to her before turning back to the screen.

> {Izuku sputtered and turned red, but Mei was already skipping toward the doors. He was definitely going to have to get used to the way she phrased things. Did she even realize how she sounded or did she just not care? Honestly, from what Izuku had seen from her so far, it could be either one. Still, it was comforting to know that he'd have at least one friend if he made it into the support course. Well, one person who didn't hate him at the very least. That was gonna be weird.}

"And just like that it's depressing again." Kaminari comments.

"Come on, my guy," Ashido replies "every good story has its ups and downs."

"Doesn't mean I have to like the downs." He shoots back.

> {Izuku shook his head and grabbed his bag, then made his way to the front of the room, where Powerloader was sitting at a large desk next to the pro hero Midnight, who must have arrived sometime while they were taking the written exam. Izuku didn't want to interrupt their conversation, but he also didn't want to be late for the practical just because he didn't know where it was. There was a possibility that there were signs outside that he could follow since that seemed to be the case for the invention and design tracks, but considering that Powerloader hadn't even mentioned the analysis track since Izuku had arrived, he wasn't willing to bet on that.
>
> Izuku hesitated another moment before speaking, he was gonna feel so stupid if they told him to to just follow the signs, "Um, excuse me?"
>
> Midnight stopped halfway through whatever story she had been telling and both heroes turned to look at Izuku, who fidgeted in place at the sudden attention.
>
> "Hey, hot stuff." Midnight purred. "What can we do for you?"}

"Really?" Aizawa deadpanned.

"It's my gimmick and he's so nervous it's cute." Midnight defends.

{“I was just wondering, um,” Izuku grimaced. Way to make a good first impression. “Do you know where the intelligence and analytics test will be? I mean, of course, you know, you’re in charge, it’s just that you didn’t say anything about it, Powerloader, sir, so I, um, just was kinda confused and…”

Izuku trailed off awkwardly. The heroes seemed a little shocked, for some reason,}

"Oh just wait." Mic shivers.

{_but they didn’t seem annoyed by his question, so that was something. Powerloader flipped through some papers on the desk in front of him before looking up at Izuku again, “You’re Izuku Midoriya, correct?”

Izuku nodded and the heroes shared a look that Izuku couldn’t read before Powerloader turned back to him, “Sorry for the confusion, Midoriya, it’s just that most years, we don’t actually have any applicants for that emphasis, so it’s easy to forget it exists. Since you’re the only one applying, it honestly slipped my mind, so I went on autopilot and gave the same spiel I give every year. Sorry.”

“O-oh.” Izuku swallowed, suddenly even more insecure. “I knew it wasn’t as popular, but I thought there’d be at least a few others…”

“Oh, you’re so cute, I could just eat you up!” Midnight cooed. “Are you sure you don’t want to swap to the ign track? I’m a lot more fun than that scheming old rat.”}

"Rat?"
"She doesn't mean..."
"No way."
"Is this why the teachers seem so nervous?"

{“W-what?” Izuku sputtered. “T-the rat?”

Powerloader glared at her, “Sorry about her, Midnight teaches art here at UA, which puts her at the head of the design emphasis, *which still doesn’t give her any right to steal students from the rest of us!* ” Midnight stuck her tongue out at him, but otherwise didn’t interrupt. “And most students who end up emphasizing intelligence and analytics are recruited by Nedzu after they show potential in other courses. We’re not used to people applying for

analytics right off the bat.”}

"That's kinda cool!" Hagakure cheered.

{Izuku didn’t know how to respond to that, so he just nodded, “So, um, about the practical…?”

“I’ll take him!” Midnight squealed. “We can get to *know* each other better.”}

"You really gotta stop flirting with the students." Mic comments.

"*Never*."

{“Don’t you have your own practical to run?” Powerloader said dryly. “You’d better go before your students spread paint everywhere, I’ll show Midoriya where to go.”

“Let’s be honest, if anyone is going to destroy the room, it’s going to be *your* brats, not mine, but okay.” Midnight pouted for a second, then shot Izuku a wink. “Good luck, hot stuff. You’re gonna need it.”}

"Poor thing has no idea." Midnight mumbles.

{“Ignore her.” Powerloader said as he stood. “She’s just a tease.”

Izuku jogged after Powerloader as they walked through the maze of hallways to...wherever they were going. No one had actually said where that was yet. His mind was still reeling from the revelation that he was the only applicant for intelligence and analytics, “So, um, should I be worried?”

Powerloader shrugged, “I honestly don’t know. Like I said, most people don’t apply to this track, so I don’t actually know what the practical consists of, but you wouldn’t have made it this far if you didn’t have some kind of skill or interest in it, so you’ll probably be fine.”

“Um, do the other applicants usually make it in?” Izuku asked. “I know there’s not many, but…”

Izuku was interrupted when a door in front of them swung open. When he glanced at Powerloader, the man looked tired, but not necessarily surprised, so Izuku turned back to the doorway, his eyes widening as he realized *who* exactly stood there.

“Hello, Midoriya.” Nedzu’s grin was wide enough for it to be slightly unsettling. “You must be the one who was poking around my servers this morning.”}

The screen fades.

"That's it!" Ashido cried "I wanna know what happens next!"

"Cliffhangers suck!" Kaminari agrees.

Many other cries ring out complaining and eager to see Nedzu's test. It took longer than usual to settle the theater as the next chapter starts.

Now Playing

Deku? Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

ENGAGE ANALYSIS MODE

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

The Interview

{All the examinees sat awkwardly in the lobby outside Nedzu's office, waiting for their turn to be called. The atmosphere was tense not only because everyone was nervous, but because the boy with the wind quirk kept glaring at the boy with the ice quirk, who didn't seem to notice and kept staring straight ahead. Izuku couldn't think of why the Wind was so angry at Ice, considering that Wind won their round of the physical, but he figured there must be a good reason. Unless of course Wind was like Kacchan and just angry all the time, that was always a possibility. Better give him a wide berth.}

"Thank god we don't have to deal with that tension anymore." Izuku comments.

Todoroki cringes "Again, I'm sorry about what happened at the provisional license exam."

"It wasn't entirely your fault." Izuku defends.

{"So…" A girl with green hair broke the silence, "That physical was something else, right?"

"Yeah," another examinee laughed, "Some serious American Ninja Warrior stuff. Do you really think we'll have to climb that much as heroes? My arms are still sore!"}

"I love that show!" Kaminari cheers.

{“I think it’ll depend on what kind of hero you want to be,” Izuku hadn’t even realized he’d opened his mouth until everyone was looking at him. Oh no. He hurried on in a panic, “I mean, well, daylight heroes probably don’t have to climb as much since most daytime villains are on street level, but it’s very helpful for underground heroes to get a bird's eye view of situations and they spend most of their time patrolling from the rooftops rather than the street. Daylight heroes stay on the street so that people can see them, so they don’t have much use for climbing, except for maybe in a rescue situation and...I’ll shut up now.”}

"Are we gonna have parkour lessons." Kaminari wonders aloud.

"That'd be kinda cool." Ashido comments.

"Until you fall off a roof." Kirishima jabs.

{Izuku’s face was hot in embarrassment and he looked at the floor as the rest of the examinees stared at him.

“I’d never thought of it that way,” Yaoyorozu said, and Izuku shot her a grateful look, “ I’m planning on being a spotlight hero myself. I never really hear about underground heroes, so I sometimes forget they exist.”}

"That's the point." Aizawa grumbles.

{“That’s kind of the point of underground heroes, though, isn’t it? So that no one really knows they exist?” The green-haired girl spoke up, “I’ve considered going that route, but I’m not really sure. My quirk is kinda gross, so I’m not sure I’d ever be very popular anyway.”}

"That's no reason to choose your path." Izuku remarks concerned.

{Izuku perked up, “Your quirk involves disconnecting your limbs, right? I saw you use it a few times during the practical. How much muscle control do you have over a body part when it’s disconnected? What would happen if a body part was injured or destroyed when it wasn’t connected…” Izuku realized he was rambling and quickly slammed his mouth shut.

The green-haired girl sat in shock for a moment before responding, “Uhh... yeah. My quirk is called Lizard Tail Splitter and it allows me to disconnect any part of my body at will. I can split into up to 50 pieces at a time.” Her right hand disconnected

and scuttered toward Izuku and up his arm, poking him in the cheek, “I can fully control them, even disconnected, and levitate them. If any are destroyed, I can regenerate them, but it takes a lot of energy, so I prefer to just call them back if I can.”}

"That's so cool!" Izuku shouts in unison with the screen.

{“That’s so cool!” Izuku gushed, “That would be great for underground work. Most villains wouldn’t think to look for an eye or an ear hiding in the corner of a room, so your quirk would be perfect for intelligence gathering. It would also probably be useful for sabotage since a hand could easily fit into small spaces. You’ll make a wonderful underground hero if you choose, but don’t just do it because you think your quirk is gross.”

She smiled widely, “Thanks! I’d never thought of it like that!”}

"I really didn't, thanks Green Bean!" Setsuna calls out.

{Izuku nodded, “Yaoyorozu, your quirk is some kind of creation, right? That grappling hook was really complicated, but you made it with no problem. What kind of objects can you create?”}

"Analysis mode: engaged." Kaminari joked causing a few snickers.

{Yaoyorozu smiled, “My quirk is called Creation. I can transform the lipids in my body into any non-living thing I want, but I have to understand the molecular structure. I’ve been studying chemistry since I first developed my quirk, so I can produce any element on the periodic table fairly easily as well as most known molecules. It’s just a question of how they all come together.”

Most of the other examinees were paying attention to the conversation now and they were quick to pipe up with their own observations of Yaoyorou’s quirk. After that, another person piped up and soon everyone was sharing their quirks. Even Wind and Ice had been roped into the discussion.

“Yeah! My quirk is Whirlwind! I can control any wind and I am super passionate about hero work!” Izuku was almost physically blown back by the sheer energy that Wind put off. Ok, so being constantly angry like Kacchan was out, but if he said passion was so important, it was easy to see why he didn’t like Ice, who remained blank-faced and probably didn’t express passion for anything.}

"That makes sense, I guess." Todoroki winces.

"You've gotten a lot better socially." Ururaka pipes.

"It helps that I live with people who care." Todoroki whispers to himself. Izuku leans over and subtly squeezes his hand as Ururaka turns to him concerned.

Noticing her look Izuku says "Let's just watch the screen." Accepting the dismissal for what it was the squad turns back to the screen.

> {Now it was Ice's turn. He paused for a moment, then said flatly, "My quirk is called Half-Hot, Half-Cold. I can produce ice from my right side and fire from my left, but I don't use my fire." His tone clearly communicated that he was done talking and everyone sat awkwardly for a moment as they digested his declaration. Wind was glaring at him again with even more intensity than before.}

"Why didn't your kid use his fire anyway?" Hawks asks innocently.

Endeavor winces, wondering how to explain his son's *rebellious* faze "I loathe to admit it," he started seemingly pained by what he's saying "but I have been a terrible father." While the Pros and teachers present want to ask questions they silently agree now is not the time.

> {"Well, that's cool then," Yaoyorozu said finally, then turned to Izuku, "What about you Midoriya, what's your quirk? It wasn't really obvious from the physical round."
>
> Izuku's stomach sunk. Of course, they were going to ask about his quirk. These were the first people that acted like they could be friends since he'd gotten his quirk, well, besides the underground heroes, but did they really count since they were all so much older than him? They'd reject him as soon as they knew; everyone did. How was he going to get out of this?
>
> All of a sudden, the door to Nedzu's office opened and an examinee walked out, followed by the principal himself, "Izuku Midoriya?"}

"He timed that!"
"Bet!"
"Nedzu to the rescue!"

> {Izuku nodded in relief and practically ran into the office. Nedzu

smiled knowingly and shut the door behind him.

“Have a seat! So you’re the famous Deku I’ve heard so much about? To tell you the truth, I was quite surprised to hear that you were so young.”

Izuku sat down across from the principal and nodded, “I honestly wasn’t trying to trick anyone,” he laughed, “I freaked out when I realized how old Eraser and everyone thought I was! I thought it would be obvious from my analysis that I was just a fanboy.”}

"Just a fanboy?!" Ururaka asks dramatically.

"Ururaka what..." Izuku starts.

"Try the ultimate fanboy!" She cries loudly much to Izuku's embarrassment.

{Nedzu poured two cups of tea and took a sip, “I’ve read some of your analyses. They are extremely impressive.”

Izuku shook his head quickly, “They’re really not. They’re just a fanboy’s rambling and I have no idea why heroes like them so much. Everyone else seems to think they’re creepy…”

“Well,” Nedzu clapped his hands together, “While we’re on the subject, perhaps you wouldn’t mind giving me a brief analysis of your fellow examinees?”}

"Now he's done it." Bakugo grumbles.

{Izuku’s eyeI’mit up as he started to wander, “Well, um, there’s Yaoyorozu, she’s got a creation quirk that is super cool. It wouldn’t be easy to use, but she’s put in a massive amount of work learning chemistry so that she can create pretty much anything. The only weaknesses I can see are maybe how fast she can think under pressure. Also if she has to create a lot in a short amount of time, I’m not sure she has the fat stores for that. Then there’s the girl with the lizard tail quirk, she can separate her body parts, which would be perfect for intelligence gathering…”

The interview continued with Izuku rambling as Nedzu listened and sipped his tea, occasionally interrupting with an observation or question. Before Izuku knew it, a half hour had passed and there were two empty cups of tea sitting on the desk.}

"That sounds like fun." Izuku remarks to the horror of his friends.

{“Well, Deku, thank you.” Nedzu stood and walked around the desk, “You may go rejoin the other applicants outside, or you may go home if you wish.”

“Wait, the interview is over?” Izuku looked confused, “But I just did some analysis, which I was going to do for fun anyway? Isn’t the interview supposed to be difficult? Aren’t you supposed to ask why I deserve a place at UA? Why I deserve to be a hero?”

Nedzu looked at him curiously, “Your analysis is a valuable skill and I never doubted that you were ‘deserving’ as you put it. Would you prefer the interview were more difficult?”

Izuku waved his hands, “Well, no, it’s just…” He rubbed the back of his neck, “This just felt like tea with a friend.”}

"IT FELT LIKE WHAT!?" Ashido shrieked. Most of the theater couldn't help but agree.

{Nedzu’s eyes brightened and he smiled, “Then I hope we can do this again sometime, regardless of your results.”

Izuku returned the smile and Nedzu led him back out into the lobby and grabbed the next student and just like that, his entrance exam was over.}

The screen fades as the theater fills with a mixture of horror and curiosity. Nedzu excitedly planned tea with a certain student. As everyone settles the screen loads.

Now Playing

Mastermind chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Toga

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

Learning

"I'M GONNA MEET MASTERMIND!!" Toga screeches.

{Izuku checked the address Giran had texted him to make sure he was in the right place before going in, letting the door swing on its hinges behind him. The travel agency he was in was obviously a front, the bored young woman at the front desk fixing him with an unimpressed stare that very obviously said, *you're lost, idiot, get out of here before you hurt yourself*. Izuku just ignored it, walking up to the desk with the sweetest smile on his face.}

"We'll have to do some background checks on travel agencies to find this one." Tsukauchi remarks.

{"Hi! I have an appointment with Giran. He said he had a package for me?"

The girl continued staring at him for a minute before she gave up and sighed, "If you're sure, squirt. What's the name?"

Izuku's smile got wider, "Mastermind."

He almost laughed as she did a double take, suddenly much more awake.

"Just a moment sir," her voice shook slightly, "I'll just let him know you've arrived."}

"Talk about appearances can be deceiving." Dabi snarks as he chuckles.

{Izuku nodded and found a seat in the lobby as the receptionist made a call. He was just pretending to look through a magazine when the door swung open again and a blond girl in a loose school uniform came skipping in and leaned over the receptionist's desk.}

"IT'S ME!" Toga cries.

"Is it just me or does she look older in this world?" Dabi wonders.

"The gamemaster did say anything could be different." Shigi reminds.

"This is so cool." "Talk about lame."

{"Hiya baby! You're cute! Giran said he wanted to see me, do you know why? Was it to meet you? I like your shirt, by the way, it's such a pretty shade of red. Red's my favorite color! I love seeing everyone in it! You just came prepared."}

"She totally would look even cuter covered in blood!" Toga agrees as the boys snicker.

{Izuku smirked at the cornered look on the receptionist's face as Toga encroached further and further into her personal space. She was saved by Giran coming out from the back.

"Mastermind! Pleasure to see you again. Nice to see that the phone I gave you is working well!"

"It's working wonderfully, thanks," Izuku replied, "The laptop as well. If the other gear I've ordered is even half that quality, I don't think I'll ever order from anyone else."}

"Giran does know quality." Dabi remarks puffing out his chest as Shigiraki rolls his eyes.

{"That's what I like to hear," Giran clapped him on the back and turned toward the receptionist and Toga, who was looking at Izuku hungrily, "Toga, I'll be with you in just a few minutes. Can you find something to entertain yourself out here in the meantime?" The receptionist looked faint as Toga smiled widely at her, her fangs on full display.

“Your poor receptionist…” Izuku said when the two arrived at Giran’s office.

“Yeah,” Giran replied, “But remind me whose fault it is that Toga is here, to begin with.”}

"He has a point, kero."

"I doubt Mastermind cares." Izuku replies.

{“Point taken,” Izuku chuckled, “So, you have my villain outfit?”

Instead of replying, Giran just took a large box and put it on the desk. Izuku looked over the contents, inspecting the armored pants, shirt, and jacket before moving on to the gas mask. Overall, it was simple and more than a little plain compared to the flashy hero costumes plastered all over the news, and it was exactly what Izuku wanted.}

"He'll be able to hide better this way." Aizawa grumbles.

"He just keeps getting harder to find." Tsukauchi sighs.

{“It all looks good. And the weapons?”

“In the gym where you’ll be training with Toga. Speaking of, I don’t really like the idea of having to find a new receptionist. I just barely hired this one. The gym is the last door on the left, I’ll go get Toga and meet you there.”}

"He isn't really gonna let him just wander around is he?" Ashido asks.

"The doors are probably all locked and shit." Bakugo snaps.

{Izuku nodded and made his way down the hall. He tried a few of the other doors, but they were all locked.}

"See!"

{Good, Giran’s not just a trusting idiot. The gym wasn’t huge, but there was enough room to move around comfortably. There were a variety of different-sized boxes stacked against the walls so that they could train with obstacles when they were ready and there was a large display of weapons on the wall beside the door. Izuku guessed that this room was normally used for demonstrations of the most common weapons Giran sold.

He noticed an innocent-looking cardboard box sitting on the ground under the weapons display and was halfway to wondering what was inside before he saw the name Mastermind written in small black letters in one corner. He smiled and opened it. All the weapons he'd ordered were there, as well as a few extra "training" versions, which were basically the same, except dull instead of sharp.}

"I'm so excited!" Toga squealed bouncing in her seat.

{"Is this really him? Is this Mastermind? He's so tiny!" It was a wonder this girl was such an effective killer, considering she probably wouldn't know stealth if it bit her in the butt. Izuku really hoped that this wasn't one of those "smart people make stupid decisions" moments because he wasn't really ready to die today. Maybe he should have put his affairs in order before showing up?}

"Probably!" Dabi snarks.

{Something must have shown on his face because Giran laughed, "I would say she won't bite, but honestly I don't know. Yeah Toga, this kid is Mastermind. Don't let his size fool you though, he's probably one of the smartest villains I've ever met. Mastermind, I'm sure you already know this is Toga Himiko, considering you're the one that wanted this meeting."

"Oooh!" Himiko squealed, "Mastermind knows who I am?! And he's so cute! You need a cute nickname to match! Like Stainy! Mastermindy? Master-chan? Mind-chan? Mind-chan! That's perfect! Giran said you asked for me Mind-chan! Why does a cutie like you want to meet an adorable killer like me?"}

"Mind-chan!" Toga cheered.

{Izuku swallowed his doubts and smiled. It was getting easier to understand her the more he listened, her excitement wasn't too different from his own ramblings after all. And Giran probably wouldn't let her kill him. Probably.

"Well, um, you probably know that not many people have met me, um, yet. So, um, I need to learn how to defend myself, and, um, you're really good at knife combat so, um, yeah." He cringed and saw Giran mirroring the expression. *Smooth* . Toga, however, didn't really care.}

"On good that was awkward!" Izuku whined. Most of the room cringed along with him.

{“Wow! So you want me to teach you how to fight Mind-chan? That’s so cool! I don’t really know what I’m doing half the time, I just like to see people in red, so I don’t know if I’ll be a good teacher, but it’ll be lotsa fun to try!”

Despite his common sense screaming at him to get as far away from this girl as possible, her enthusiasm was contagious. “Perfect Toga-sensei!}

"Ew!" Toga cringed.

{If you’ll try to be a good teacher, I’ll do my best to be a good student.”

It was Toga’s turn to cringe, “Toga-sensei? That’s not cute at all! Just call me Himiko, Mind-chan!” and then she ran at him with a knife.}

"Just jump right in there." Dabi grumbled.

{Izuku didn’t think he had ever been sorer in his life.

He was currently stretched out on the couch icing his bruises with bags of frozen peas. Thankfully, the training knives he and Toga had been using only left bruises instead of slashes. Toga wasn’t too happy about that: she insisted that red was a much prettier color than purple.}

"That's because it is!" Toga called out.

{Izuku heard the door open but didn’t bother moving. He wasn’t even sure he could at this point, but maybe he was just being dramatic.

“Oh! Izuku sweetie, are you ok? What happened?”

“Hi Mom,” Izuku tried to smile, but it came out as more of a pained grimace, “I just spent the afternoon with a few friends. One of them is pretty good at martial arts and she was trying to teach me. She’s just, uhh, *really* enthusiastic.”}

"That's one way to put it." Todoroki deadpans.

{His mom didn't seem any less worried, but seemed to decide to take his word for it, "Did you learn a lot? What's she like?"

Izuku lit up, "Yeah, I did! We basically spent the whole time going over some basics and getting them into my body. She said I'm a really fast learner. Um… what else? Like I said, she's really enthusiastic and not just about fighting. Himiko just does everything with about twice as much energy as anyone else, so she's actually a lot of fun to be around. It was a little intimidating at first, but I'm getting used to her, so it's not too bad."}

"At least someone appreciates my energy." Toga pouts at the boys.

{Mom was smiling too now, "I'm so happy you're making friends, Izuku! She sounds really nice! Maybe you should bring her around for dinner sometime,"}

"Oh man, can you imagine?" Izuku asks in horror.

{*yeah, no, that would not be happening,* "You've been so happy these past few months. I was so worried about you after Katsuki was attacked by that awful villain, you were just so quiet for months after, and then that whole thing with trying to find a job. I don't know what changed, but you seem to be thriving now!"

Izuku thought about it for a minute. It definitely hadn't been a *smooth* transition from wannabe hero to up-and-coming villain but, was he happier now? He thought of his fight with Toga and how she didn't ever ask about his quirk, just pouted that she wasn't allowed to make him bleed. He thought of Giran and how he treated him like an equal. He thought about his overflowing inbox, full of people who respected him and wanted to be associated with him and he felt a small smile tug at the corners of his mouth as he looked up at his mom.

"Yeah, I guess I am. I've found people who like me and I'm doing something I enjoy. For the first time in a while, I think I'm really happy."}

As the screen fades the theater sat in silence. Even the villains were solemn in the fact that he could only find happiness in the pain of others, though they each understood. As the people shook off their melancholy the next chapter began.

Now Playing

Viridian Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Don't do drugs

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Viriadian: the Green Guide

Trigger

{When Izuku rolled out of bed and immediately started his nightly stretches before getting dressed in his vigilante clothes. Was it weird that the middle of the night was turning into his favorite time of day? It probably was. Kacchan would probably think he was crazy for wanting to go out in the middle of the night to bother heroes.}

"Considering he goes to bed at 8 I wouldn't be surprised." Todoroki comments.

{Izuku snuck out to the front door but froze with his hand on the doorknob. Hadn't he decided yesterday that he *really* needed to take weapons with him? He hesitated another long moment while he debated the merits of just going out weaponless again. He could always just rely on what trash he could find, right? It had worked just fine last time.}

"Relying on street trash is a good way to get yourself injured." Aizawa grumbles.

{But while he *could* do that, he probably shouldn't. Mom would kill him if she knew he was running into fights without any kind of weapon or plan of attack and while he wasn't planning on her finding out, it was the principle of the thing.}

"When she finds out about this she's gonna lose her mind." Izuku whines.

{So something small and easy to hide, but also something he could grab quickly so he didn't cut too much into his vigilante time tonight. Hmmm...cut...maybe he should bring some sort of knife?}

"As logical as that is I'm not sure if I like the Problem Child using one." Aizawa gripes.

"I'm sure Young Viridian will figure it out." All Might reassures.

"Let's not forget Mastermind is also planning to wield knives." Nedzu chirps. The teachers grumble and gripe at the villain and vigilante taking to knives.

{He turned on his phone's flashlight and went into the kitchen. Were there any knives that Mom wouldn't miss? He obviously couldn't take any from the knife block, they'd be missed immediately. He might be able to get away with taking a steak knife, but...it probably wouldn't be a good idea to put a knife in his pocket without any kind of sheaf, would it? He'd just end up cutting himself as he tried to run get heroes and that wouldn't do any good.}

"That's a good point." Ururaka murmurs.

{He needed a knife with some kind of protection already built in. Izuku smiled as an idea occurred to him and he started to rummage as quietly as he could in the junk drawer. It took him a while to find what he was looking for since they used it so infrequently and he was starting to get scared that they'd actually lost it when his hand closed around the old box cutter. Izuku practiced extending and retracting the blade a few times to get a feel for it. Yeah, the cuts wouldn't be very deep, but they'd be enough to distract a villain in a pinch so Izuku could run away or find another opening. It was a good start.}

"That's a relatively safe blade to start with." Toga whispered. The boys turn to her with a little confusion. "What?" She snarks "Everybody's got to start somewhere!"

{Now onto a bludgeoning weapon. On a whim, Izuku went to the pantry and grabbed a can of soup. Running around with a can wouldn't be good in the long run, since it was heavy and hard to hold, but he could always replace it with something more streamlined later. Besides, it had worked so well last time that he knew it was reliable.}

Midnight snorts "Now I'm just imagining running into a teenager late at night and asking why they have soup in their pocket."

"It'd be fun trying to watch him explain it." Mic chuckles.

{A can and a boxcutter didn't feel like enough, though. Izuku was going to be fighting quirkless against people with quirks, so he probably needed a few more weapons than most vigilantes did. He wished he had something like tonfa, but he didn't know how to use them and they were just a bit larger than he was comfortable carrying around in his hoodie pocket. Some kind of stick would work pretty well, though, if only...Izuku quickly went to the hall closet where Mom kept her old crafting supplies. Hadn't she done a project with wooden dowels a few months ago? If Izuku was lucky, there'd be a few left.}

"Those are going to snap in his first fight." Aizawa complains.

"Let's just hope he'll be okay." All Might comforts.

{He grinned when he saw the dowels standing up against the wall. He grabbed two of the shorter pieces, each about twenty centimeters long and three around, but one was slightly shorter than the other. Izuku hoped that the difference wouldn't throw him too off-balance if he had to use them in a fight.

Now that he finally felt armed enough, Izuku turned off his flashlight and walked out the front door. He was ready.}

"No, no, he definitely isn't." Aizawa is getting a little frazzled.

{Izuku pressed himself against the wall to make sure he was completely hidden in the shadows while he watched the thugs. He had heard raised voices, so ran toward the side street and was currently hiding in an alley, but the thugs weren't actually *doing* anything. There were about ten of them and they were probably part of a gang or something, but they seemed to be joking around and roughhousing, not doing anything nefarious.}

"Then walk away Problem Child." Aizawa remarks to the screen.

{"When did your friend say she was coming?" One of the thugs asked. "And why did we have to meet her *here*? There are flies everywhere, man!"

“Oh, stop being such a baby.” That guy seemed to be the leader. He had green skin and what looked like thorns on his face, which made Izuku wonder what his quirk was. “She’ll be here soon.”

Izuku shook his head and turned away. There were other people who needed his help, there was no point in waiting around here. He was just about to leave when the first thug cried out in pain and Izuku whipped around to see him clutching a hand to his neck, “Damn fly bit me!”}

"Man I hate fly bites." Ururaka scratches her neck in sympathy.

"If flies are bugging you just let me know, kero."

Ururaka barked a laugh at the implication "Thanks Tsu, you're the best!"

{Within a few seconds, each of the thugs slapped a hand to their necks and cried out. Those must be some vicious flies if they bit all of them, but why bite all of them at once? Izuku should run, those bites looked painful and he didn’t necessarily want to have to explain to his mom how he got an insect bite when he was supposedly at home in bed. He turned to leave again.

“You bitch! I’ll kill you!”

Izuku watched in shock as the thugs all started powering up and *attacking each other*. What? And they all had such powerful quirks too! He thought quirks this powerful were rare, and the more powerful your quirk, the more likely you would be encouraged to be a hero, so a group of thugs all with powerful quirks was unheard of. But they were going crazy like they were on drugs or something, but they hadn’t even been smoking!}

"Oh, *shit*." Aizawa whispered. All the teachers turn to him, he wants to tell them but one look at Headcase says he shouldn't, resigned he remarks "I'm sure it'll be explained eventually." Understanding his predicament they settle down.

{Just then, one of the thugs caught sight of him, “Boys, look, we’ve got a toothpick to crush!”

Izuku froze and swallowed thickly as every one of the thugs turned toward him. Time to run.}

"Run!"

"Get away!"
"Fucking *book it*!"

{Shota crouched on a rooftop overlooking the bar district. Normally this was Amplifier's territory, but she'd come down with the flu and had to call in sick, so Shota had agreed to cover her shift. He would usually be trying to track down leads on the Trigger case, but he hadn't gotten any new information recently. He was starting to get frustrated with the whole thing. Trigger had been in Japan for years now and so far they had only been able to arrest low-level thugs and pawns and were no closer to finding the people behind the Villain Factory.}

"Aizawa-sensei and Viridian are gonna meet!" Kaminari cheers as the rest of the room chatter excitedly.

{He wouldn't admit it, but Shota was scared. People didn't do things for no reason, so there had to be some eventual goal to use drugs to temporarily turn normal people into powerful villains, but Shota couldn't see it. Trigger on its own was bad enough, but the stuff it was sometimes cut with made the user violent and prone to attacking anyone in sight. And that wasn't even counting the people who had been abducted and had their bodies modified to accommodate their more powerful quirks.}

"That sounds like human experimentation." Iida remarks.

"Who needs drugs when you could have my babies!" Mei exclaims loudly.

"Phrasing." Todoroki deadpans.

"Was that a reference?" Izuku asks.

"To what?" Todoroki wonders innocently.

"Nevermind."

{Hopefully, the people behind the Villain Factory weren't doing this to gear up for a major attack, but there was no way to know if they were. The dealers didn't know anything about the production of the drug and even those higher up on the supply chain hadn't known anything about the kidnappings. Shota was just ready for this case to be over already, he was sick of not knowing anything.}

"That's gonna be frustrating." Ashido whines.

"I don't think daylights really deal with organized crime." So comments.

"But you might be called in for raids that can take weeks to plan and waiting is painful." Kirishima reminds and then more quietly adds "Especially when you know someone's in danger."

The rest of the squad comfort him quickly, even Bakugo adding in his gruff "You saved her didn't you, and don't say that was Deku 'cause you know he couldn't have done it alone."

> {There was a crash off to his left and Shota turned to see a kid running as fast as he could as he was chased by a mob of powered-up villains. The kid was wearing a green hoodie and goggles and kept glancing around as he ran like he was looking for someone. Was this the new vigilante Amplifier had told him about? It must be, but didn't Viridian lead *heroes* to *villains* and not the other way around?}

"Plans never survive contact with the enemy." Was echoed by many Pros to which the students took note.

> {As the group got closer, Shota decided it didn't matter much. He needed to stop them before any civilians could be injured, which in the bar district was a distinct possibility. Damn problem child, why couldn't he have left the villains where they were?}

"Really Sho?" Mic tsked.

"To be fair he doesn't know how this happened." Midnight remarks. Aizawa just growls to himself.

> {Shota jumped down, startling Viridian, who stared at him with wide eyes that Shota could barely see behind his goggles, then tripped and landed flat on his stomach, making Shota snort.}

As did a few others.

> {"Stay away from the fight, kid." He said. "I'll handle this."
>
> He canceled the villains' quirks, then started to wrap as many as he could in his capture weapon, knocking them into each other and into the walls to disorient them. He couldn't see Viridian anymore, so hopefully, the kid had enough sense to run away.}

"If only." Aizawa grumbles.

{Izuku watched with wide eyes as Eraserhead fought the thugs. *Eraserhead!* He'd been trying to get Amplifier, mostly because she was the closest and the thugs' quirks were making it very hard for Izuku to stay ahead of them, but Eraserhead was even better. His quirk was so cool! Izuku could tell where he was looking just by seeing whose quirk could activate and whose couldn't. And then his hair! Did he have a secondary levitation quirk or was there something about his hair floating that was necessary for his quirk? Maybe it was built into his quirk to make sure that the hair didn't get in his eyes? If that were the case, if Eraserhead was hanging upside-down and activated his quirk, would his hair float upwards like it was defying gravity like it did when he was standing up, or would it obey the laws of physics and stay down so that it wouldn't risk getting in his eyes? What if…}

"Oh my god, Shota!" Midnight squealed "we got to see his analysis of you!" She gasped "Do you think we'll see mine?"

"Maybe," he shrugs " right now I'm just trying to answer those questions."

"We can run some tests when we return." Nedzu pipes in.

{Izuku was so caught up watching Eraserhead's quirk in action that he didn't notice that one of the thugs had gotten out of Eraserhead's line of sight and was looking straight at him. Izuku yelped as a tentacle wrapped around his ankle and started pulling him toward the grinning villain, who apparently had a squid quirk that gave him tentacles for hair.}

"Pay attention!"
"Get away!"
"Don't hurt the bean!"

{Izuku hurriedly reached into his pocket and grabbed the box cutter he'd brought, fumbling as he expended the blade, then slashed at the tentacle. The villain screamed and let go as dark blood started pouring out of the wound. He growled at Izuku, who was holding his knife in front of him like a lifeline, then launched several tentacles at him at once. Izuku slashed and dodged as fast as he could, thankful that he was used to dodging explosions. He managed to cut quite a few of the tentacles that were attacking him, but the box cutter wasn't long enough to cut

them off, not that Izuku really wanted to do that anyway. If he cut them off, would they grow back, or were they like an arm that once it was severed, was gone forever?}

"That doesn't matter right now!"
"Focus!"
"Keep it up!"

{He *really* needed to stop getting distracted by interesting quirks because just as he was getting into a rhythm fighting the tentacle villain, another came up and hit him between the shoulder blades, throwing him to the ground and making him lose his hold on the box cutter. He looked up to see a villain with bulging muscles looming above him. This wasn't good.}

"Get up!"
"Hurry!"
"Don't hurt him!"

{Well, he didn't have any ranged weapons, but his best option was the dowels, probably, since he'd lost his knife. Izuku's heart sank as he grabbed the wooden sticks from his hoodie pocket. They didn't look like they'd do a lot of good against a strength quirk. The man lunged for him again and Izuku dodged around him, then brought both sticks down on the back of the man's skull.

They broke.}

"Shit!"
"Fuck!"
"Damn it!"

{"Uh-oh." Izuku gulped as the man slowly turned around, and glared at him. This was it. This was how he died. Wait...was he deflating?

"I thought I told you to get away, kid!"}

Cheers rang out at the teacher's rescue.

{Suddenly the man was wrapped in Eraserhead's scarf and pulled out of the way to reveal the hero himself staring down at Izuku with an exasperated expression. Ok, *this. This* was how he died.}

Snort

"Talk about dramatic."
"Valid."

{“S-sorry, Eraserhead, sir. I j-just…”

A movement behind Eraserhead caught Izuku’s eye and he realized that the tentacle villain hadn’t been taken down yet and was going to grab Eraserhead! Izuku didn’t even have time to think before he was rushing forward. His dowels may be broken, but they had splintered when they broke, which made them more like stakes. He didn’t need to completely defeat the villain, he just needed to immobilize him for long enough for Eraserhead to erase his quirk.}

"Get him!"
"Let's go!"
"Don't encourage him!"
"He can't hear us!"

{He ducked beneath Eraserhead’s arm and brought his stakes down on two of the tentacles, pinning them to the ground and making the villain cry out in pain. A few seconds later, the man was dragged toward him as his tentacles retracted back into his head. Izuku looked up behind him and could barely see a glint of red behind the gold goggles. Eraserhead waited a few seconds to make sure that the villain wasn’t getting up, he must have passed out from the pain once his quirk was erased, then turned his glare toward Izuku.

“You must be Viridian.”

Izuku winced, “I didn’t ask for that article, I swear! I’m so sorry, Eraserhead, I was going to get Amplifier when these guys just started going crazy all of a sudden, but then one of them saw me, and then I…”

“Wait, did you say they went crazy all of a sudden?”

Izuku nodded and shrunk a little when he saw the scowl deepen on Eraserhead’s face. He watched as Eraserhead knelt down and turned the tentacle villain over onto his back, then opened his mouth and took out his tongue.

“Hmm, black. Figures.”

“Why is the color of his tongue important, Eraserhead?” Izuku

asked hesitantly. “Couldn’t it just be a part of his quirk? Don’t some species of squid naturally have black tongues?”}

"Children," Nedzu calls out "please take note of any investigative procedures these stories show; I imagine it will be quite useful in your careers."

{Eraserhead looked up at him appraisingly, “True, but why don’t you check one of the other villains? I doubt you can justify them *all* having black tongues naturally.”

Izuku slowly made his way over to one of the unconscious villains and looked at his tongue. Sure enough, it was black, but, “The color’s fading.”}

"So if a villain is all jacked up and acting off their rocker check the tongue." Ashido says rubbing her chin.

{Eraserhead nodded, “It’s the drug. It’s called Trigger. You can tell who’s addicted because the tongue stays black. These guys must have just shot up the one time.”}

"Good to know." Izuku mumbles.

{“But they didn’t shoot up.” Izuku said.

Eraserhead froze, “...what?”

Izuku fidgeted under his stare, “Um, I was watching them. They weren’t using needles or anything before they went crazy. They weren’t even smoking.”

Eraserhead frowned, “Strange…”

“Um, Eraserhead, sir?” Izuku fidgeted again. “I’m, um, I’m sorry for getting in your way.”

Eraserhead sighed, “Just call me Eraser, kid, and while I wish you hadn’t gotten involved, you managed to hold your own. Stay out of fights, kid, you don’t want to die.”

Izuku waited for probably a moment too long before nodding and running away.}

"Pick up on the hint, please." Midnight whines at the screen.

"I'm sure I will." Aizawa says confidently.

{Izuku tucked himself back into bed after tending to his injuries for the night and thought about those weird thugs. Eraser said it was some kind of a drug, but how did they get exposed to it? Izuku shook his head. He should leave the investigation to Eraser and the police, he would just get in the way.

Right as he was falling asleep, he remembered what one of the thugs had said right before going crazy. *There are flies everywhere*. Weren't flies supposed to be asleep at night?

Huh, weird.}

"Put it together kid." Aizawa grumbles.

The screen fades as the student discuss what flys had to do with drugs while their teacher silently screams to himself 'no spoilers'.

Now Playing

Cheat Code Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Hacking

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Practical

{Izuku gaped at Nedzu, *the* Nedzu, principal of UA, and tried not to fanboy. He failed, “Oh my goodness, you’re Nedzu! One of the few animals with a quirk, although that is becoming more common as animals evolve alongside humans, but High Specs gives you hyper-intelligence and…” suddenly, Izuku’s brain caught up with his mouth and he realized exactly what Nedzu had just said, “and you caught me trying to hack UA before I even took the entrance exam…”}

"Cue the freakout." Izuku huffs in resignation.

{He really was an idiot, just like Kacchan said, wasn’t he? He was going to get kicked out of UA before he even got accepted just because he’d gotten bored and decided to do something stupid! Of course, Powerloader wasn’t leading him to his practical exam, he was taking him to the principal, who was going to press charges, and then he’d get a permanent record, and nowhere else would accept him and…}

Nedzu tries to suppress his chuckles.

{“I’ll leave him to you, then. Good Luck.” Powerloader said. As he turned his back to leave, Izuku could have sworn he muttered something about the end of the world, but honestly, he was too scared of what was about to happen to pay much attention. He swallowed thickly and looked at the principal, who was still grinning at him. Maybe he was just waiting for Izuku to

apologize? Well, apologizing couldn't make things worse, at least.}

"I mean..." Ururaka starts "he did *hack* into the school."

{Izuku lowered himself into a deep bow, "I am so sorry, P-principal Nedzu, sir. What I did was c-completely uncalled for and inappropriate. I, um, wasn't thinking c-clearly and obviously, that's no excuse, but…"

"Oh, there's no need for that, Midoriya!" Nedzu chirped. "In fact, what you did was quite impressive."}

"Impressive?" Izuku asks.

"Are you really surprised?" Iida remarks.

"Nedzu is rather chaotic." Todoroki comments.

{Izuku straightened up in shock. The principal's expression was hard to read, on account of his face not being human, but he couldn't see any anger or malice, "W-what? You're not m-mad?"

"Oh no!' Nedzu stepped aside and gestured for Izuku to come in, "In fact, I was quite delighted! It's not often that people are brave enough to try, so it's quite fun to test my defenses against new faces. Tea?"}

"That makes too much sense." Mei comments.

{Izuku nodded numbly and sat in the chair Nedzu offered him. He still couldn't believe that he wasn't in trouble, but apparently, Mei had been right about him making a good first impression. Or maybe Nedzu was just getting his hopes up to crush them later. It wouldn't be the first time.}

"And it's sad again." Kaminari whines while Ashido pats him on the back.

{Nedzu carefully poured the tea and set a cup down in front of Izuku, "So, how long have you been hacking?"

"Um, I think about eight months?" Izuku took the cup and held it while he waited for it to cool. "I only picked it up after I decided to apply to the Support Course. I, uh, I thought it'd be useful for information gathering."}

"Quite astute." Nedzu chirps.

{“Oh, I agree completely!” Nedzu chirped and took a sip of his tea. “But I am surprised that you’re still so new to it, considering your creativity this morning. Was applying to support a recent decision?”}

"You could say that." Dabi snarks.

{“I, uh, well,” Izuku chuckled awkwardly, “I thought that hero support was just inventing stuff. I didn’t think to look into the analysis track until...um, sorry, I’m rambling, but well since I really enjoy analyzing heroes and quirks, it just seemed perfect, I guess.”

Nedzu smiled knowingly, “It’s not often that we get young people applying to be analysts. Most people assume that support is simply the invention of support items like you did, and while analysis is an important part of creating those support items, many people overlook its potential in strategy and intelligence gathering. Speaking of your analysis, may I see your portfolio?”}

"The moment of truth." Mic comments.

"I'm both excited and terrified at the thought of him being Nedzu's student." Midnight chimes.

{Izuku nodded and dug the notebook out of his backpack to hand to Nedzu, who eagerly started leafing through it. Izuku wondered if he was just skimming his writing or if his quirk gave him the ability to speed read. If it was the latter, then how fast could he read? Was the speed limited by his quirk or could he train himself to read even faster? If he wasn’t limited by his brain, then his speed would probably be limited by how fast he could physically turn the pages, but if he was reading something that scrolled automatically, like on a computer, how would that affect the speed…}

"All these questions I didn't even know to ask." Aizawa comments in well-hidden awe.

{“I’m not as fast as all that, Midoriya.” Nedzu chuckled. “I still have to wait for my brain to catch up before I can turn the page, and while my quirk definitely helps, most of my speed reading is actually a skill I’ve cultivated.”

Izuku flushed red and slammed his mouth shut, “Sorry, I know my muttering is creepy.”

“On the contrary, it was a wonderful demonstration of your real-time analysis skills.” Nedzu said simply, turning back to the portfolio, “And while it will most likely be useful to learn to be aware of when you are muttering, there is nothing inherently wrong with the habit.”}

As Izuku looks at the screen with awe his friends take the opportunity to encourage him to speak up during his mutter storms.

{Izuku’s eyes widened and he stared at Nedzu silently while he finished the portfolio. His muttering...wasn’t bad? That just seemed so weird to him. Kacchan had always said that it was annoying and creepy, but then again, he’d said the same things about Izuku’s notebooks. Maybe it was creepy if a hero did it, but was simply an eccentricity when an analyst did, that would make sense. Yeah, an *eccentricity*, not an annoying habit that he had to get rid of.

Izuku liked that.}

"Aww," Hagakure starts "I'm all warm and fuzzy now."

{Nedzu finally turned the final page of his portfolio and set it aside, “This is quite impressive! I am assuming that you have been analyzing heroes for much longer than you’ve been hacking.”

“Yes, sir.” Izuku said. “I started analyzing heroes as a hobby when I was four, I just didn’t realize it was a marketable skill.”

“Would it be alright if I held onto this so I can peruse it more thoroughly at a later date?” Nedzu asked.

Izuku nodded, a weird sense of pride growing in his chest the more the principal praised him, “I already assumed that I wasn’t going to be getting it back since it’s part of my application.”}

"Maybe I should share my notebooks after all." Izuku whispers to himself. His friends brighten but leave him be so as to not overwhelm him.

{“Excellent!” Nedzu clapped his paws together. “Now, you have your laptop with you, correct?”

“Yes!” Izuku dug out his laptop and set it on the desk in front of him.

“Perfect!” Nedzu said. “Now onto the practical portion of your exam!’

Izuku swallowed nervously, thinking of all the ominous good luck wishes from Midnight and Powerloader, “Um, what will I be doing exactly?”

“As I said, I was very impressed with your efforts this morning, so I simply want you to continue what you were doing then.” Nedzu’s eyes twinkled with mischief, “I want you to hack into UA.”}

"That's just mean!"
"Is that really his test!"
"R.I.P."

{Izuku blinked away tears of exhaustion and frustration as he limped away from UA, sore from sitting hunched over his laptop for the past few hours. He’d tried everything he could think of, every back door, every little trick, even a hastily made virus, but by the end of the exam, Izuku had barely made it past the first round of defenses. It didn’t matter how much Nedzu had enjoyed his portfolio, or how well he’d done on the written exam, he’d completely *failed* the practical.}

"Poor baby."
"You probably did better than you think."
"Don't be sad."

{What was his mom going to think? After all these months of her going out of her way to support him, would they grow apart again? Would she be disappointed in him? Where was he going to go to school? What job would even take a stupid, weak, quirkless nobody like him?}

"He's spiraling!" Hagakure warns.

"Quick! Someone comfort him!" Ashido cheers.

{Suddenly, Izuku was rammed into by somebody going full speed. Immediately, he froze and curled in on himself to try to become a smaller target. Kacchan shouldn’t still be here, should he? Nedzu

had left sometime during Izuku's exam to go monitor the hero course practical and Izuku had tried to use that time to hack UA using Nedzu's computer but couldn't even crack the password. But Nedzu had come back pretty quickly, so Kacchan should already be at home by now. What if it was someone else who had learned he was quirkless and was going to beat him up and they'd never find his body and…}

"Good lord dude," Sero turns to Bakugo "that world's version of you did a number on that kid."

"I've noticed." He snaps back.

{"Whoa, Izu-Kun, are you ok?! What's wrong?!"

Izuku jolted from his spiraling thoughts and looked around, but the only person near him was Mei, who currently had one hand resting on his shoulder. Oh, Mei running into him was...actually completely in character, probably. It was just Mei, not Kacchan. And Mei wasn't anything like Kacchan so she wasn't going to beat him up. Probably.}

"I'd never!" Mei yells.

{Izuku forced a smile onto his face, "Nothing! You just startled me, is all!"

Mei frowned like she didn't believe him, "Then what's with the tears?"}

"Now she's done it." Bakugo and Midoriya say in unison.

{He tried, he really did, but he only lasted about two seconds before those stupid Midoiriya tears were running down his face like some sort of stupid geyser. He hadn't even known this girl a full day and now he'd ruined their friendship or their partnership or whatever it was because here he was, crying in front of her and he *just couldn't stop.*}

"It's okay Deku." Ururaka comforts.

"Tears are manly." Kirishima adds.

"We've never thought any less of you for crying and we never will." Todoroki affirms.

{Mei had started rubbing his shoulder sometime during his breakdown and was probably trying to be comforting, but her muttering about unleashing her babies on whoever hurt him was actually pretty intimidating.}

"You'd *never* beat someone up, huh?" Ururaka jabs in amusement."

"Unless someone deserves it!" Mei snarks back.

{“No one hurt me, Mei-chan.” Izuku finally got out between the tears, “It’s my own fault anyway.”

Mei looked at him skeptically, “Then what happened?”

That set off the tears again, but thankfully he could speak through them this time, “N-nedzu wanted me to hack UA for my practical, b-but I couldn’t do it! I failed.”

“Oh...” Mei sat down on the sidewalk and pulled him down next to her, ignoring the weird looks from the people passing by, “Are you sure they didn’t just want you to try?”}

"Wha..." Izuku starts but it's interrupted by the screen.

{That made Izuku pause, “What?”

“Well, every failure is just a stepping stone to success, right?” Mei said excitedly, “And you said yourself that UA’s cybersecurity is absolutely insane, so what if he was planning on you failing?”

Izuku just stared at her, “If he wanted me to fail, then why did he tell me to succeed?”

Mei flicked him on the forehead, which was apparently her way of getting him out of his head and telling him that he was being an idiot, “A lot of inventions are just about learning the process. Even if they don’t work, they still weren’t a waste of time because they make the next invention faster! UA’s security wouldn’t be the best in the business if a first-year could ram through it, right? They probably just wanted to see how you approached a problem that you couldn’t solve. They wanted to see your process!”}

"That makes a lot of sense, kero." Tsu comments.

{Izuku thought about that for a moment. It made a certain kind of sense, but then again, it seemed like everything Mei said toed the

line between being reasonable and being absolutely insane, so maybe it was just that she was saying it that made it sound so believable. Still, it might make waiting for his rejection letter a little less painful, just so long as he was careful not to get his hopes up too high.}

"Cautious optimism is still optimism." Ashido cheers.

{“If you say so...” he said slowly, “but what about you? How did your practical go?”

Mei grinned and immediately launched into a story that involved blowing up her workspace three times until she finally got a working prototype of hover boots twenty minutes before the end of the exam. Izuku listened and laughed with her until his tears dried and Mom started frantically texting him wondering when he was going to be home. By the time he started walking home, his heart was a little lighter than it had been, and his phone was a little heavier.

It had a new number in it, after all.}

As the screen fades Ururaka cheers "All in favor of Mei being an official member of the Dekusquad?"

"I'm not against it, kero." Tsu agrees.

"If Midoriya's fine with it." Todoroki informs.

"I'll try not to hold the sports festival against her." Iida remarks.

"Welcome to the squad Mei-chan!" Izuku cheers.

"Great to be here Izu-Kun!" Mei laughs.

Now Playing

Deku? Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Teasing

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Acceptance

{Izuku had an anxiety attack every day, right before the mail came. He tried to tell himself that it was just a letter, that it wasn't important and wasn't worth getting worked up over. But it wasn't just a letter, was it? It was a letter from UA, a letter that would determine his future, a letter that would tell him whether or not he was worthy to be a hero. And… there it was, the anxiety attack was back. Izuku sighed. He thought he'd already done this today, why did he have to do it again?}

"Story of my life." Izuku grumbles.

"You're way too hard on yourself Izu-Kun." Mei comments.

"Please tell us if you ever feel this way." Iida chops.

"No reason to do it alone." Ururaka chimes.

"Thanks guys."

{It had been a week since the entrance exam and there still wasn't a letter. Not that the letter couldn't come later than a week after the exam. Present Mic had said in the introduction that letters normally came between five days to two weeks after, but...Izuku just wanted this over with already. It was torture just waiting, not knowing if he was good enough or not!}

"You're awesome!"

"Be patient!"
"We believe in you!"

{There was a knock at the door.

“Izuku!” His mom called out, “Could you get the door? My hands are full making dinner!”

“Ok, Mom!” He got up from the couch and opened the door, only to do a double take when he saw who it was.}

"They're delivering the news in person!" Ashido cheers.

"That's so awesome!" Kaminari cries.

{“Hey kid,” Eraser said, “We brought you something. Can we come in?”

Izuku stood aside in shock, allowing Eraser, Ms. Joke, and Mr. Brave, all in civilian garb, to come inside.

“Sorry Nighteye couldn’t come,” Ms. Joke said, “He’s in the middle of a major case right now.”

“Yeah, right,” Brave laughed, “The old man’s just a spoilsport.”

“Mom?” Izuku said as he walked into the kitchen, the three pro heroes trailing close behind, “Um, these are my friends. This is Eraserhead, Ms. Joke, and Mr. Brave.”}

"Yup, just some friends." Midnight teases.

"Nothing special about this at all." Mic adds sarcastically.

{Inko’s eyes widened, “These are the pro hero friends you told me about when you were recommended, right?” When Izuku nodded, she bowed, “Thank you all for being so kind to my son. I was so excited when he told me he had friends, so imagine my shock a few months ago when I learned that all his friends were pro heroes!”}

"It's concerning that *we* are all his friends at this point." Mr. Brave comments.

"That'll change when he starts school." Ms. Joke waves him off.

{Eraser raised an eyebrow. He suspected that Izuku didn’t get a

lot of encouragement to be a hero, but *all his friends*? She was probably exaggerating.}

"Nope" echos through the theater.

{“He’s a great kid, Midoriya-san.” Ms. Joke laughed, “We’re lucky to have met him. By the way, since I’m not in costume right now, you can just call me Emi Fukukado.”

“Nice to meet you Fukukado-san.”

“Yeah, me too!” Mr. Brave said, “My name is Haruto Nakamura.”

The other two looked at Eraser, who stared back for a minute before sighing, “I’m Shota Aizawa. Deku’s a smart kid, you must be proud of him.”}

"So enthusiastic." Midnight drones as Mic and Joke snicker.

{Inko’s face soured slightly at the nickname, but it was almost too fast for the pros to catch before she was smiling again, “I am! I wish he would pick a better career path though… heroics isn’t very forgiving for someone like Izuku.”}

"Damn."
"Well fuck me, I guess."
"Yeesh."

{Izuku looked like he wanted to sink into the floor as the room went cold. *Fix this,* “Umm, so why are you guys, here? Um.. not that you’re not welcome, you totally are, it’s just that you’ve never come over before and you guys sounded like you planned it, but I didn’t know about it unless I forgot. Oh no! Did I forget?”

Mr. Brave, *Nakamura,* laughed, “No Deku, you didn’t forget. We wanted to surprise you! Show him Eraser!”

Aizawa rolled his eyes but had a small smile as he reached into his pocket and took out an envelope.

“My UA letter!”}

"No shit, Sherlock." Dabi snarked.

{Aizawa handed it to the kid, who looked at it with wide eyes, “Of course, kid. Did you forget I work at UA? We wanted to be here when you open it.”}

"Aizawa-sensei's a surprisingly good friend." Kaminari comments.

"Dude!" Sero chastises.

"What was that Kaminari?" Aizawa calls out.

"Nothing sir!" He squeaks back.

{Izuku looked to his mother, who smiled sadly, “You and your friends go open it in the living room. I’ll keep working on dinner and you all can come eat after, ok?”

Izuku nodded and went back to sit on the couch. Aizawa sat beside him, while Nakamura sat on the chair and Fukukado made her home on the floor. All three looked at Izuku in anticipation and he took a deep breath before tearing open the envelope. He then promptly started crying.}

"Typical." Ururaka, Bakugo, and All Might said in unison.

{“Oh no! Eraser! I thought you said it was good news! I’m going to kill you!” Fukukado screamed!}

"Don't do that!"
"They're happy tears!"
"That's just how he is!"

{Aizawa looked slightly panicked, “It is good news! I don’t know why he’s crying, I swear!”

“I-I’m just so happy!” Izuku choked out, saving Aizawa from being physically wrestled to the floor, “I-I made it! I’m going to UA! I’m gonna be a hero!”}

"Little Green does that a lot I take it." Brave remarks.

"That'd take some getting used to." Joke giggled.

{“Congratulations, Deku!” Nakamura said, “You deserve it!”

Fukukado gave him a big hug, “Oh, I’m so excited for you! I kinda wish you were coming to Ketsubutsu with me, but you’re gonna need Nedzu to help you with that big brain of yours." She sighed. "Oh well, there’s still internships, and I’m sure you’ll hear about me all the time since Eraser’s madly in love with me!”}

1-A does their best to suppress their laughter as the other students

whisper in confusion. The villains are just as confused looking back at Eraserhead noting the mix of confusion and amusement as the man in question seethes in his seat.

{“No, I’m not.” Aizawa denied, “Stop telling people that, Joke.”

“It’s not a joke, I am!” Fukukado laughed loudly and tried to mess up Aizawa’s hair, but he dodged and scowled at her. She responded by sticking out her tongue.}

"I ship it." Ashido whispers conspiratorially.

{“I swear even Deku is more mature than you.”

“Maturity is overrated.” Nakamura said, then crossed his eyes and pulled a face, making Izuku giggle.}

The theater starts to crack much to Aizawa's dismay.

{Aizawa looked dead inside, “You’re all impossible. I hate all of you.”

“Except for Joke!” Nakamura said, “You *love* her!”

Izuku laughed even harder. So this is what having friends really felt like. Somehow when Joke teased, it didn’t feel the same as when Kacchan did it. It wasn’t hurtful at all, it was just friends giving each other a hard time. It was nice.}

"Hell yeah it is." Ururaka cheered as the theater reins themselves in.

{“Dinner’s ready,” Inko looked to where her son was laughing on the floor with his friends. Even if she didn’t want him to be a hero, she thought she could deal with it if it meant he had friends like these.}

"Oof."
"Ouch."
"Jeez."

{“Thanks, Mom!” Izuku led his friends back to the kitchen and they all sat down.

“Thanks for the food, Midoriya-san!” Fukukado said as they dug in.

“Yeah, this tastes amazing.” Nakamura added.}

"Of course it does my mom made it." Izuku mumbled and then turned red at the realization he said that aloud.

{Inko smiled, “It’s really the least I could do. And besides, we have to celebrate my baby boy getting into his dream school.” She leveled a serious look at Aizawa, “I trust you’ll take care of him and make sure he stays safe.”}

"I'd rather face a thousand villains than an angry mother." Mic shivers.

"You're just saying that because you can punch a villain." Midnight teases.

"So you'd rather willingly fail a student in some way than face a villain?" Aizawa asked efficiently shutting her up.

{Aizawa nodded solemnly, “Of course Midoriya-san, I would never send Deku into a situation he wasn’t prepared for. When we take him along on internships, we’ll always be with him to protect him if things get dangerous. Deku may be smarter than most pros, but he’s still a student, and he’ll be treated accordingly.”

“Good,” Inko sighed, “I’ll hold you to that, Aizawa-san.”

“So Eraser, I guess you can’t expel your whole class this semester,” Brave smiled, “because that would mean expelling Deku too.”}

"Wait that actually happened!?" Kaminari asked in horror. Many others did the same albeit quietly and to themselves.

{“You expelled a whole class?” Inko was wide-eyed.

Aizawa put down his fork, “I only expel kids who have no potential. It’s cruel to let them continue when they’ll only end up getting themselves or others killed. I won’t expel Deku because he has potential. I wouldn’t have recommended him otherwise.”}

"Guys!" Hagakure cried out in excitement "We *all* have potential!" The rest of the class preened at that revelation.

{“I find it hard to believe that an entire class was completely devoid of potential,” Izuku insisted, “They must have had strong quirks.”

“You’re living proof that quirks aren’t everything,” Aizawa said, “They might have had strong quirks, but their personalities convinced me they didn’t have what it takes. Spoiled brats every single one of them. No one had ever told them no and let them get away with murder just because of their quirks. That’s not how you raise a hero. Heroes have to be willing to protect people and give their all, not just coast by or be the best.”}

"By the sounds of it Mineta and Bakugo seem most likely to get expelled." Shoji comments.

"Indeed, though Bakugo has improved since the year began." Tokoyami retorts.

{Izuku couldn’t help but think of Kacchan. Everyone praised him no matter what he did simply because his quirk was perfect for heroics. But, Eraser couldn’t be talking about people like Kacchan, could he? After all, Kacchan would be an amazing hero.}

If one were to look at the Bakusquad one might notice how unusually quiet they were.

{“Most teachers aren’t as strict on expulsions as Eraser here, Midoriya-san,” Fukukado explained, “I teach at another hero school and I probably expel maybe one student a year? Sometimes I don’t expel any at all, it all depends on the class. But then again, Ketsubutsu isn’t as competitive as UA.”

“Oh, that’s good I guess. One of Izuku’s oldest friends is going to be applying to UA as well, and I wouldn’t want to have to deal with Mitsuki if her son gets expelled!”}

Izuku shivers violently at the thought.

{“Don’t worry about Kacchan, Mom. I’m sure he won’t have any problem getting in, and I know he’ll be the best hero!”

Inko smiled, “You’re right. It’s silly to worry! Who knows, maybe you two will be in the same class!”

Aizawa hoped he was imagining the tension that came into Deku’s shoulders at that, “Maybe…”}

"Have we been misreading their relationship all year?" Aizawa asks.

"Sometimes things slip through the cracks, Sho." Mic comforts.

"Though that does beg the question, how much of this did *our* Bakugo do?" Midnight posits

{“No matter what, you’ll probably make some of the best friends you’ve ever had in hero school,” Nakamura said, “I know I did.”}

"And I have." Izuku beams making his friends swell in joy.

{“Maybe you’ll find someone you have instant chemistry with, like me and Eraser.” Fukukado said while Aizawa rolled his eyes.

“Oh, are you together?” Inko asked, “How did you two meet?”

“We’re not…” Aizawa started, but Fukukado interrupted him.

“Our agencies were nearby when we were first starting out. In between missions and drama, a mutual love blossomed!”

“No it didn’t” Aizawa muttered. Nakamura and Izuku snickered.}

As did much of the audience.

{“That sounds so romantic.” Inko sighed.

“We aren’t dating, Midoriya-san.” Aizawa said.

“Not yet,” Fukukado said, “but don’t worry, Midoriya-san, I’ll win him over eventually.”

A mischievous glint came into Inko’s eye as she looked between the two and Aizawa gulped.}

"The poor thing." Izuku whispers.

{“It’s alright, Fukukado-san, I understand completely,” Inko said, “Did you know that I had known Izuku’s father for almost a year by the time he realized I was flirting with him?”

“Mom!” Izuku cried out in betrayal. Fukukado just laughed.}

And the theater erupted in laughter.

{“Well, at least we’ve passed that stage of the courtship! I doubt Eraser could ignore my flirting.”

“Neither can anyone else, that’s the problem.” Aizawa said.}

"Oh, *snap*!" Ashido cried with her laughter.

{“Oh, so you want me to be more subtle in my affections! I can do that!”

Aizawa just sighed as everyone laughed at him, “Deku, don’t encourage her.”

“Why not?” Izuku said innocently, “You two are so cute together!”}

Izuku promptly smack his hands over his mouth to muffle his laughter as Aizawa called out a gruff "That little *shit*!"

{This made Nakamura spit out his drink as Aizawa looked betrayed, “I trusted you, Deku. I trusted you and you stabbed me in the back and left me with *her*. ”}

"God it's too much!" Kaminari chuckles.

{“That was amazing, Deku!” Fukukado held out her hand for a fist bump, which Izuku took her up on, “And don’t be so dramatic, Eraser! I’ll win you over eventually and you know it.”

Aizawa just sighed and shook his head, “More like you’ll wear me down. Your way of flirting is like a war of attrition.” he turned to look at Izuku as he pointedly changed the subject, “So Deku, we need to talk about internship options.”}

The room starts to settle at that.

{“Don’t internships happen after school starts?” Inko asked.

“Normally, yes. Your son, however, is a special case. He’s been working with us in an advisory role for several months at this point and there is a raid coming up that we invited him on before knowing how young he is. We still think that his input will be essential, but he’ll need to be part of an official internship in order to come.” Inko looked worried. “We will make sure he stays safe while still allowing him to contribute to the mission.”}

"This is gonna be so cool!" Izuku enthuses.

{“Internships for first years normally only last a week, and we’ve been arguing non-stop about who gets to take you.” Fukukado said, “One of the options we’ve thought of is having you do a few

different internships in the next two months leading up to the raid. That way, you'd get more intensive training to make sure you're ready and we can all stop fighting!"}

"Multiple internships!" Izuku cries excitedly for his counterpart.

{Izuku's eyes went wide, "That sounds amazing! Can I, Mom? Please?"

Inko looked at him for a long moment before caving, "You're sure that these internships will help him be safe?" The three heroes nodded, "Then ok, but don't put yourself in any more danger than you need to and listen to the heroes, ok?"}

"Duh." Izuku snarks. His friends pointedly remain silent at that.

{"Ok!" He hugged her tightly, "Thank you so much, Mom!"

"Thanks for dinner, Midoriya-san. Congratulations, Deku!" Fukukado said as the heroes left, "See you for training and internships."

"And don't forget there's a planning meeting Saturday," Nakamura said, "Detective Tsukauchi'll be picking you up."

"I still don't understand why I can't just walk…" Izuku said sullenly.

"It's because you're still a kid," Aizawa ruffled Izuku's hair, "Problem child."}

As the screen fades teasing and excitement rose through most of the room. It took some time for everything to calm down but once it did many remembered what story came next and all but the villains, who were eager, became greatly on edge.

Now Playing

Mastermind chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Physical presence

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

Face to Face

{Mastermind looked back at Izuku from the full-length mirror in Giran's office. He didn't want to get dressed in his villain outfit at home and potentially risk getting caught by his mom or the neighbors. If everything went well tonight, he would be finding his own base soon enough, but until then, Giran's office would have to do.}

"A secondary location will make him even harder to track." Tsukauchi sighs.

{His villain outfit was practical, but still managed to look intimidating. Or at least it *would,* if Izuku wasn't so short.}

"People will get over that real quick." Dabi snarks.

{The black armored pants were fitted, but flexible, and were paired with a black armored shirt made from the same material, but what tied the outfit together was the jacket. It was dark green and had a hood he had pulled up, his hair just peeking out from underneath it. There were dozens of pockets that; had smoke bombs, grenades, flash bangs, and, of course, his knives.}

"Talk about armed to the teeth." Ururaka comments.

"Plus Ultra." Izuku grins.

She gasps "Deku no!"

"I'm sorry." He laughs back.

"You don't sound sorry." Todoroki deadpans.

{He also had knives strapped to each of his legs and a few hidden in his dark red boots for emergencies. After a few months of training with Toga, he was deadly with a knife, if not quite as good as his teacher. The last thing he put on was his mask. It was a solid black and covered his entire face below the nose. It didn't look like a standard gas mask, looking instead like a simple ski mask, but Giran assured him it would filter out any harmful gas attacks. Looking in the mirror, the effect was stunning. The knives alone would have been intimidating, but the hood partially shaded Izuku's face so that the only distinguishing feature was his bright green eyes, lit with a deadly sort of fire. He loved it.}

"Anyone else feels that chill crawling up their spine?" Sero asks around. Many raise their hands or nod in reply.

{Giran had arranged a face-to-face meetup now that Toga said he *probably* wouldn't die immediately as soon as he was attacked. The meeting was with a small gang that had territory in eastern Tokyo and were wanting to rob a casino. Izuku himself was still considered small time, even if he was becoming more well known, so Giran said this would be a good chance for Mastermind to start showing his face, even if it was behind a mask.}

"Great, he gonna gain even more traction." Aizawa deadpans.

{"Looking pretty snazzy." Giran was leaning against the doorframe, smoking his ever-present cigarette. "I'd say knock 'em dead, but that'd be bad for business."

Izuku rolled his eyes, again marveling at how they stood out against his outfit, "Let's go. The sooner we get this over with, the sooner I can pretend I'm not nervous."}

"Mood." Izuku says.

"You can tell us if and when you feel that way, kero."

"Stuff like that's what friends are for." Ururaka cheers.

"I think we should all keep that in mind." Iida informs.

{Giran chuckled, but grabbed his keys, "You're such a smart kid, I

keep forgetting how new to the game you are. Normally it takes years for small fry like you to get to this point in their careers."

"Yeah well, normally small fry don't make a living killing heroes."}

"Since when was Golden Boy sassy?" Dabi smirks.

{The drive to the warehouse was short, but maybe that was because there was not really any traffic at two o'clock in the morning. As they walked in, Giran and Mastermind were met with a dozen armed guards surrounding a man almost as big as Fatgum who was obviously the head honcho. Izuku immediately started analyzing, matching the people and quirks he saw to the research he'd done beforehand.}

"Mind-chan's first meeting," Toga bounces "so exciting."

{The head honcho was sneering at him "Giran, I said I wanted to meet with Mastermind, not some kid who's still wearing diapers! What kind of a joke are you trying to pull here?"}

"Oh, he's gonna get it." Dabi grins and rubs his hands together, leaning forward in anticipation.

{Giran just smirked, Izuku was fairly certain it was his default expression, but there was a possibility that he was genuinely amused by the situation. "Yeah, I know he doesn't look like much, but I guarantee you he's the real deal. Apparently, you don't have to be tall to be smart."}

"And he about to prove it." Shigi grins menacingly.

{Izuku's nervousness was slowly morphing into anger and determination. If there was anything he was used to from his life before villainy, it was jerks who thought it was their right to look down on him. The head honcho had gone on a rant about Giran not taking him seriously and how he was powerful and blah, blah blah. Izuku just sat down on the chair provided for him and spoke quietly, the determination in his voice and eyes passing for confidence in his words.

"Takumi Fujito. Age: 42. Quirk: Spines, you convert the fat in your body into spines that can be detached, however, they have a tendency to bleed when you do that, so you avoid detaching them if at all possible. Family: you have a wife that you married ten

years ago and four kids, all under the age of 15. Your youngest just turned six last Wednesday, congratulations, by the way. Weaknesses: your family, the dependence of your quirk on your previous fat stores, and the risk of blood loss if forced to use it in the wrong way. You also have a severe allergy to shellfish. Did I get anything wrong?"}

"Oh snap!" Twice calls out *"That was nothing."*

"Can you imagine being on the receiving end of that?" Dabi asks still grinning.

"I'd prefer not to." Shigi snaps.

{The room had gone completely silent and Izuku smiled innocently beneath his mask and looked directly at the head honcho, who gulped. "So," Izuku said pleasantly, "Shall we begin?"}

"Did we get all that?" Aizawa asks.

"Word for word." Nedzu chirps happily.

"I'll add it to the files when we return." Tsukauchi sighs.

{Detective Tsukauchi rubbed his eyes in frustration before taking another gulp of his coffee. The Mastermind case was rapidly turning from a minor headache to a massive migraine. The guy had been on the scene for less than ten months and he was already becoming one of the most dangerous villains the detective had ever been tasked with finding.}

"Now we get to see how the cops and heroes are handling Mastermind." Ashido grins.

"Best part of crime shows." Kaminari replies.

{He looked at the file again, filled with whatever neatly written plans they had managed to confiscate from villains and a handful of blurry photographs pulled from security cameras at internet cafes. All the evidence pointed to one thing: Mastermind was a ghost. The police hadn't even known about his existence until months after his first murder, and it was the media who first caught onto the fact that all the recent hero deaths were connected. The heroes and police hadn't even thought to check.

Why would they? Each murder was committed by different people with different quirks and there wasn't any signature connecting the deaths.}

"So it took a long time to figure out he even existed because they didn't have anything in common." Sero concludes.

"So not manly." Kirishima agrees.

{It wasn't until Nedzu noticed that the villains committing the crimes weren't smart enough to pull off the kinds of heists they were doing that they began looking for a strategist rather than a serial killer. A strategist for hire. Looking at it now, it seemed obvious and simple. The murders were only possible because there was some genius pulling the strings from behind, making sure that the villains knew every possible weakness and how to exploit it. Nedzu was anxious to catch Mastermind mostly because he wanted an intellectual equal to play chess with, but Tsukauchi wanted to catch him because the more his influence grew the more dangerous he became.}

"This version of me seems rather crass." Nedzu remarks.

"I'd hope you wouldn't track down a career criminal for a simple game of chess." Tsukauchi adds.

"Such a thing would be little more than icing on the cake." He replies.

{The only comforting fact about the entire case was that Mastermind never agreed to in-person meet-ups, which limited his influence considerably.}

The theater cringes at that. "So who wants to tell him?" Jirou snarks.

{If the police and heroes could catch him before he got up the courage to show his face, then they might be able to nip this in the bud, but Mastermind was starting to change his MO and that made Tsukauchi nervous. For a long time, Mastermind had used internet cafes to communicate with the villains who hired him, which had been the only solid lead the police could get on the guy, as thin as it was. He had been caught on camera multiple times, but always kept his hood up and seemed to know where the cameras were placed, so they still had no idea what he really looked like. Tsukauchi and Sansa had gone to interview employees at the various cafes but because they didn't know about Mastermind until several months after he became active it

had been too long for most to remember a random guy in a hoodie. The only thing they had to show for the interviews was one clerk who remembered a young man with green hair, but even he admitted it could have been black and the harsh fluorescent lights were just messing with his eyes.}

"*So close.*" Ojirou stressed.

{In short they still had nothing, but were tracking any suspicious activity at dozens of internet cafes in the city.

And then he stopped using them.}

The villains have started laughing at this point.

{The crimes continued, accelerated even, but there was no physical sign of Mastermind anywhere. Tsukauchi and the rest of the police could only guess that he had either bought some sort of untraceable tech, or he had figured out how to build it himself. Either way, their most solid lead had gone cold and they were back to where they started. Well, almost. At least they knew the guy existed now.}

"Cause that's an *amazing* comfort for the poor little heroes." Dabi smirked sarcastically.

{A slight movement in the corner of his eye made Tsukauchi reflexively drop the file and reach for his gun.

“Hey now, I didn’t think I was being that quiet.”

Tsukauchi curbed his panic for long enough to recognize the long white scarf, tangled hair, and tired eyes of the hero in front of him. He sighed in relief.}

"The downside of stealth." Hagakure giggles.

{“Eraser! Sorry I didn’t hear you coming, I just…” He looked at the papers spread all over the floor, “got lost in thought, I guess.”

Eraser grunted in response, “I guess I should apologize for sneaking up on you. Stealth is just kind of a reflex for underground heroes, it takes too much work to turn it off.”}

"That's something to look forward to." Shoji comments.

"Once one is swallowed by darkness it becomes hard to find the light."

Tokoyami adds.

{“No,” Tsukauchi shook his head, “It’s not a problem. So, why are you here Eraser? Normally you go straight to sleep after patrols.”

Eraserheads expression, minute as the change was, turned grim, “I heard something concerning from one of my informants and needed to let you know as soon as possible.” He glanced down at the file that was still lying in disarray at their feet, “I have something else to add to your file.”

Tsukauchi perked up half in excitement and half in dread. While he hoped Eraser was bringing good news, his grim attitude made that much less likely. “Please tell me that you have some sort of lead on how to find him.” Even as he said it, he knew it was a useless hope. If Eraser was bringing something like that, he’d be smiling, as unhinged as the hero’s smile was.}

"Unhinged?" Dabi asks as the villains turn to 1-A to notice their shivers, wisely leaving that alone.

{As expected, Eraser shook his head and frowned, “Much worse. According to my contact, over the past week, Mastermind has met with the leaders of several minor gangs. *In person.*”

Eraser waited a moment for his news to sink in, watching as all the overworked cogs in Tsukauchi’s brain finished turning to the correct positions, and when they did…

“Fuck.”}

As the screen fades theories of what's to come next are discussed; Internships, plans, gear, weapons, and anything in between; Until the screen loads

Now Playing

Viridian Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Introducing Denki Kaminari

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Weapons!

{Izuku had never actually been to a hardware store before. It probably had something to do with growing up without a father, but Mom had always just hired a handyman for anything that need to be fixed around the house and that guy always brought his own materials, so Izuku had never really had any reason to walk inside a store like this before, which was why he was currently standing frozen at the entrance, unsure of where to begin.}

"Where is your father anyway?" Ochako turned to Izuku.

"America, as far as I know." Izuku comments off-handedly.

{Some of the employees were starting to stare at him strangely, probably wondering why a kid in a middle school uniform was staring at their store like it was some kind of labyrinth that was going to eat him alive, so Izuku forced his feet to move and started aimlessly wandering while trying to look discreetly at the signs. It wasn't his fault the store was so big and intimidating!}

"How have we not killed this kid?" Dabi wonders aloud.

"He has a quirk for one." Shigiraki gripes.

"And he's like never alone." Toga chirps.

{Alright, he'd had a goal when he'd walked in here, hadn't he? Oh, right, pipe. After the fight with those drugged-up villains last week, he'd decided that he needed to...fine-tune his weapon selection. The dowels had worked great for the first few seconds, but they broke far too easily, and just because Mom hadn't realized they were missing from the closet yet didn't mean he could just keep taking them until they were gone. What if Mom wanted to use them for another project!?}

"Awww, he's such a good son." Midnight coos.

"Except for the sneaking out and risking his life without her knowledge." Eraser reminds.

"Killjoy." She mumbles back.

{So, anyway, a pipe hopefully wouldn't break as easily and it shouldn't be that hard to buy, right? But what section was he supposed to...plumbing sounded promising. Plumbing used pipes, didn't it? Izuku fought to not facepalm at his own stupidity since he didn't need to give the staff any more reasons to question his sanity. Of course, plumbing used pipes, he really was as stupid as Kacchan said, wasn't he?}

"On occasion," Tsu remarks "then again we all have our moments." Her lips curl slightly as those around her agree and argue all at once.

{He turned down the aisle and started looking around while desperately trying to pretend he knew what he was doing. Why were there so many pipes? And why were they all so long? He wasn't looking for a quarterstaff, he wanted something he could fit in his pocket! Finally, he found some copper pipe that looked short enough to be promising. He picked up a piece and started passing it between his hands. It was light, but felt comfortable enough…

"Is there anything I can help you with?"}

"Wait a minute!"
"No way!"
"Is it really?!"

{Izuku yelped and dropped the pipe, which made a series of loud clanging sounds as it bounced on the floor. Izuku felt his face heat up and turned to the employee who was looking at him apologetically. The kid was around his own age and had yellow

hair that was almost as bright as the red apron of his store uniform.

“Sorry about that, dude.” The employee said. “We’re just supposed to offer help and expertise to the people who come in. Not that I actually have much expertise, I’m just a part-timer, but I could help you find someone who’s an expert if you want.”}

"Holy shit it's me!" Kaminari exclaimed.

"We can see that." Bakugo deadpans.

"You worked at a hardware store?" Sero asked.

"Until I got into UA, yeah." Kaminari replied.

{“Um…” Izuku didn’t think that any of the employees were experts in vigilantism, “No thanks, I’m j-just browsing.”}

"Can you imagine?" Ururaka snorts.

{“If you tell me what your project is, I could probably point you in the right direction.” The kid offered.

“It’s, um, it’s just a hobby…” Izuku glanced down at the copper pipe, which was still sitting forgotten on the floor. It seemed too conspicuous like it was a physical reminder of how useless he was. He not only didn’t know what kind of pipe to buy but he’d also managed to loudly drop one within minutes of arriving at the store. He really was such an idiot, wasn’t he?}

"This is emotionally exhausting." Monoma whispers.

"None of us are even in the story yet." Kendo comments.

{The employee followed his gaze downward and smiled sheepishly, “Sorry, dude, normally I’d grab that and put it back for you, but,” he chuckled awkwardly, “I’m not really supposed to handle any conductive materials.”

For the first time, Izuku noticed the black lightning bolt pattern in the employee’s hair, “Oh! You have an electricity quirk!”}

"Your observational skills are always quite impressive Midoriya." Iida insists.

"Okay you have to admit Kaminari's quirks is easy to guess," Izuku

defends "I mean he has a lightning bolt in his hair."

"We will concede to that." Todoroki confirms as the others begrudgingly agree.

{“Yeah!” The employee smiled brightly. “My name’s Kaminari, by the way.”

“Nice to meet you!” Izuku leaned down and picked up the pipe, “It’s really smart of you to work here with your quirk, I’m sure you’re learning all sorts of stuff about circuits and electricity!”}

A loud smack echoes through the theater causing everyone to turn just in time to see Kaminari pull his hand away from a very red forehead, and glare at the screen as if it had insulted the very core of his being.

{Kaminari’s eyes widened, “Whoa, I hadn’t even thought of that, dude! I just wanted to save some extra money for high school. I wonder if some of the guys in the electronics section would be willing to teach me.”

“I’m sure they would.” Izuku smiled. “Good luck!”

“Thanks dude!” Kaminari smiled. “And good luck on your project.”

Izuku nodded and watched Kaminari leave before turning back to the pipe in his hands. He looked it over and frowned when he saw some small dents from where he’d dropped it. Copper was probably really good for traditional pipes, but it seemed like it was too soft for what Izuku had in mind. It would be really inconvenient to have to fix dents in his weapons every night.}

"No point in using inferior materials." Mei mumbles softly.

{Which put him back to square one. If copper wasn’t going to cut it then what kinds of metal were there? There were a bunch of different plastics and PVC pipes, but those would probably have the same problems with breaking as the dowels did, so he didn’t waste much time in that section. Finally, he saw a section with black pipes that said they were made of iron. He picked up a shorter piece and it seemed like it was heavy enough to pack a punch. He almost wanted to drop it to make sure it wouldn’t dent, but the embarrassment had been bad enough the first time and that had been an accident!}

Snickers and whispers about what they would do in such a situation rumble quietly through the room.

{He chose two identical pieces that were thick enough for him to hold comfortably and around 30 cm long. They'd take some getting used to, but the store didn't sell anything shorter than that in the iron, so they'd have to do. He put his pipes in his basket and started wandering toward a sign that said *tools*. He probably wouldn't buy anything from there, but it wouldn't hurt to look right?}

"Famous last words." Chorus most of the girls and a few of the boys, all of who could be considered impulse buyers.

{Maybe they'd have a larger box cutter or something similar? The one he had was functional, but it hadn't been long enough to do any meaningful damage to that tentacle villain, so it'd be good to have something with a longer blade as a backup. Looking at the box cutters, though, Izuku realized that they didn't really have a lot of variety when it came to blade length. It seemed like most of the differences between different models were just the width and the handle, which wasn't something that Izuku cared about.}

"Everyone should have a knife or two as a backup." Aizawa agreed.

"I mean you're not wrong." Mic comments.

"Though some of us can't carry knives." Endeavor comments absentmindedly causing a few raised eyebrows "fire and metal doesn't typically mix well." He says in a way of explanation.

{Displayed right next to the box cutters, though, were a few utility knives. Izuku hesitated before looking at them. Was he really ready to carry a knife? That seemed...more serious somehow. Like he was actually planning on hurting someone rather than just taking along a weapon in case of emergencies. But was a knife really all that different than a box cutter? They were both sharp and could do some damage, and the utility knife would be really useful…}

"Get a bunch! Knives are so pretty, especially covered in blood." Toga shouts at the screen.

{He gave in and got a generic-looking knife that was able to fold into its own handle so he wouldn't accidentally cut himself. It's not like he *had* to use it, right? It was just good to have. Between

the knife and the pipes, though, Izuku was starting to get concerned about how he was going to carry everything. Sure, he had his hoodie pocket, but he'd already dropped his soup can three times while running and it had only been a week! Things just started to fall out from all the bouncing that running involved, so he should probably find a better solution.}

Amplifier Snickers "I can see it now, just chasing after this Green Guide, probably expecting a mugging, and this fool stops to pick up a can that fell out of his pocket."

"I might have an aneurysm just thinking about it." Rock Lock grumbles.

{He wandered around the tool aisle a little longer before he saw a section labeled *tool aprons*. Some looked like actual aprons, like the kind Kaminari had been wearing, but others were more like utility belts. They had loops that were probably meant for hammers, but Izuku could easily modify them to hold his pipes and some pockets that would probably be perfect for his knife and can. He chose one made out of a dark green canvas-like material that would match well with the rest of his vigilante outfit and added it to his basket. It was a little pricey, but he hadn't bought any hero merch since...well, the point was that he had a little extra allowance saved up, so he could afford it.}

"It's sad that our resident fanboy isn't drowning in merch." Hagakure bemoans.

"At least he can better protect himself." Ojirou comforts.

"And won't drop his can." Sato adds.

{Izuku made his way toward the checkout section but stopped when one of the displays at the end of the aisles caught his attention. Slingshots. Well, it *would* be nice to have something capable of long-range attacks…}

"Good." Aizawa comments "Less likely to get himself injured."

"One can only hope." Recovery Girl comments.

{He gave into temptation and read the packaging.

Slingshots, a fun, effective tool perfect for hunting and survival! Simply put your preferred ammunition (we recommend steel shot,

marbles, or even smooth rocks) in the leather pouch and fire!

There were some packages of steel shot in the same display, which basically looked like metal marbles, but Izuku didn't grab any. Firing metal at someone sounded really serious, like firing a bullet, and he really wasn't a serious vigilante. Besides, other people were probably a lot better at slingshots than he was, and if they were planning on using them for hunting or survival then they needed the professional ammunition much more than he did.}

"Of course, you're worried about the villains." Ururaka says fondly.

"Not all of them are bad people," Midoriya starts "some of them are just in bad situations."

{The cashier gave Izuku a weird look as he checked out, but he wasn't really paying attention. He should buy some marbles on the way home. They'd be perfect for his slingshot, plus, they'd solve a problem he'd been having finding rocks. Normally there was enough rubble from past hero fights that Izuku didn't have any trouble finding stuff to throw to get heroes' attention, but there had been a few times when it had taken a minute or two to find something to throw and the heroes had almost been too late. If he had marbles to throw, he wouldn't have to waste any time finding rocks! He wouldn't use his slingshot on the heroes, that'd be rude, but throwing them would work fine.}

"We're totally gonna use those as souvenirs!" Amplifier exclaimed.

"It'll become a competition I'm calling it now." Rock Lock added

{He chose a bigger toy store downtown, hoping they'd have a bigger variety of marbles. Thankfully, he didn't get nearly as many odd looks here, but it did feel weird to be here without making a bee-line for the hero collectibles aisle.}

His classmates chime in with variations of 'poor baby' and 'it'll be okay' much to Izuku's embarrassment.

{It took him a few minutes to find the marbles, but when he did, he was glad he'd come here rather than a smaller store.

There were a lot of marbles that were sold in small net bags that had ten or so normal marbles and a larger one, but what made Izuku grin was the large dispensers that sold marbles in bulk. He

grabbed one of the canvas bags and looked at the different colors. Whoever was in charge of naming marble colors should help students come up with their hero names, because they were obviously having way too much fun with their job if the crazy names like *tsunami* or *wild tiger* were any indication.}

"Can we?" Midnight wonders.

"It would certainly be interesting." Nedzu comments.

Aizawa just groans.

{ Izuku finally settled on a color called *enchanted forest* , which was a swirling mix of dark green and black, because it matched his vigilante outfit, and he bought about two pounds worth of marbles. Hopefully, that would be enough to last him at least a couple of weeks, and there were a few pockets on his new tool belt that would be perfect for them!

For the first time since he'd met All Might, Izuku walked home smiling.}

When the screen fades out a pop-up appears:

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

accept download cancel

Headcase squeals and immediately accepts turning to their audience. "It seems a fifth story will be added to the rotation."

"So what should we call this one?" Midoriya asks.

"Shadows for now at least, let's continue while the new story downloads." Headcase turns to the screen ignoring the call for discussions.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Author has ADHD is not a joke while I might write 3 chapters in a day I might also have 3 month between chapters sorry about that

Cheat Code Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Mama mets Mei

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Acceptance

{The letter was heavier than he expected. Well, logically, Izuku knew that the envelope was probably stuffed with all sorts of paperwork for if he was accepted, or maybe resources for if he wasn't, so it made sense for it to weigh *something*, but for some reason, it felt heavier than just paper. Or maybe that was an emotional reaction to the tension he'd been feeling ever since Mom had run in from getting the mail.}

"God this kid is dramatic." Shigiraki whines.

{This letter was going to determine the rest of his future. This would determine if he remained a worthless loser or if he went to All Might's alma mater to become a professional analyst, so no wonder the envelope felt so heavy.}

"It's not just in your head, it really is that heavy." Izuku comments causing Ururaka to snort.

{Mom hovered nervously, wringing her hands as she waited for him to open it. A few months ago, he probably would have gone to his room to be alone, but she had been just as involved in his preparation for the entrance exam as he had been, and honestly, after bombing the practical, he could really use the support.}

"Wow," Midoriya breathes "I had to watch mine alone."

Iida turns to him in concern "Why is that?"

"My mom didn't... doesn't want me to be a hero," he paused "whether I passed or failed I couldn't deal with her reaction." His friends, not knowing what else to do simply leaned into him in silent comfort.

{“Izuku?” Mom said finally. “It’s not going to get any easier if you wait…”

Izuku nodded and took a deep breath, then closed his eyes and ripped the envelope open like he was taking off a band-aid. There was a metallic thud that made Izuku open his eyes as something inside fell out and hit the coffee table.

“Is that...a hologram projector?”}

"You brats seriously had *holograms* as acceptance letters?" Shigi exclaims incredulously.

"Oh yeah," Jiro snarks "very 'Plus Ultra'."

{Almost as soon as he said that, the disk came to life and a small screen appeared. Powerloader was staring right at the camera, looking somewhat tired, which made sense if he’d had to make one of these for every student in the support course.}

"Man, I do *not* envy the teachers that have to do that every year." Kaminari comments

"Especially if they sent out rejection videos too." Sero adds.

"See now I'm curious." Ashido remarks.

{“Izuku Midoriya.” Powerloader began. “You passed the written exam with flying colors and turned in an impressive portfolio. However, I have been told that during the practical exam, you did not succeed in hacking UA.”

Tears pricked at the corners of his eyes and he could feel Mom looking at him with pity as he stared at the ground. Of course, he knew that he’d failed the exam! As much as he wanted to believe that Mei had been right about them not expecting him to succeed, he hadn’t been able to push away the dread whenever he thought about the test. He really was a failure. He was a quirkless nobody, just like Kacchan always said.

“I’m glad.”}

"Maijima..." Aizawa starts.

"In my defense, I don't know about his anxiety in that world."

"Not an excuse."

{Izuku whipped his head up fast enough to almost give him whiplash. Was Powerloader...glad he didn’t make it into UA? Was he rubbing it in? That didn’t seem like appropriate behavior for a pro hero...

“If you had succeeded, I would honestly be concerned about the quality of our school’s defenses.” Powerloader chucked, “Thankfully, Nedzu didn’t actually expect you to succeed, he simply set the task as a way to gauge your skill and drive, even though your portfolio was impressive enough to guarantee your admittance without any need for a practical. Take it from someone who has been working under him for quite a while now, impressing Nedzu like that is no easy feat. He seems to have...” Powerloader shivered almost imperceptibly, “*special plans* to help you realize your potential.”}

"It's the end of the world as we know it~" Ashido and Kaminari sang.

{Izuku held his breath as Powerloader gave a tired smile, “As the head of the support course at UA, welcome, Izuku Midoriya. This is your support academia!”

Izuku’s jaw dropped and he kept staring at the screen as Mom cried and hugged him tightly. He made it...He made it! He was going to UA! He did it! Oh, wait, Powerloader was still talking.

“Now that we’ve gotten that out of the way, there’s a few housekeeping items I need to tell you about. There are three first-year support classes at UA. Classes 1-F and 1-G cater to the invention track, while class 1-H focuses primarily on design. Because of the rarity of students entering the intelligence and analytics track, you have been assigned to class 1-F with the invention students.}

Mei begins vibrating in her seat desperate to keep quiet ' *no spoilers, no spoilers, no spoilers'* on loop in her head.

{Your projects and assignments will, of course, be modified to fit

your emphasis, and you'll also have daily lessons with Principal Nedzu, but you will still need to pass the lab safety test on UA's website before school starts since 1-F meets in a lab rather than a traditional classroom. Please fill out the forms included with your acceptance letter to inform us of any equipment or materials you need so we can have those ready for you on the first day of class. Congratulations, Midoriya. I look forward to seeing you in my class."}

And his friends and classmates cheer happily for the accomplishment of another version of their friend.

"Will you all just shut up!?" Dabi snaps after a few minutes of celebration too many.

"FUCK YOU, YOU CRISPY BITCH!" Bakugo stands to flip him off.

"Make me diarrhea boy!" he snarks back.

"WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!"

"You're an explosive piece of shit, that's what it means!"

"ENOUGH!" Headcase interrupts their light dimmed to almost black. "If you want to have a pissing contest wait until you're out of my theater."

"You ain't the boss of me, bitch!" Dabi rounds on the entity.

Headcase somehow darkens even further, leaning toward Dabi she whispers just loud enough for him, and him alone, to hear "Do not test me *Touya Todoroki*, you are in my home." Dabi, not being a complete fool, slowly sat down and looked toward the screen.

{"You did it, baby!" Mom hadn't stopped hugging him since Powerloader had said he was accepted. "You worked so hard! I'm so proud of you!"

That was what finally pushed Izuku over the edge into tears of his own. He had no idea how much he needed to hear that. All those years of her apologizing for him being quirkless and telling him to choose a different dream were over. His mom believed in him now! She was proud of him. That felt almost as good as being told he actually got accepted into UA.}

"I'm so happy she's proud of him but so sad it took so long." Hagakure

complains.

"That's pretty much the definition of bittersweet." Ojirou adds.

"Do you think anyone told him how proud they were in our world?" Sato wonders.

Momo stands and turns to Izuku "Midoriya," when he turns to her a soft smile spreads across her face "I am proud to count you among my friends and it is an honor to be one of yours." As he starts to tear up the rest of his class jumps to add their enthusiastic agreement.

{“Um, Izuku?” Mom said, “I think your phone is vibrating.”

Izuku listened and, sure enough, there was a faint vibrating noise. He looked around to see that his phone had fallen out of his pocket and was sitting on the couch beside him. Who would even be calling him? Kacchan was the only one at school who had his number, but Izuku was half convinced he had deleted it as soon as Auntie Mitsuki had forced him to put it in his phone.}

A loud groan comes from the blond "No I did not delete the stupid phone number." Causing his friends to giggle at his apparent misfortune.

{Hesitantly, Izuku answered the call.

“I got in!” He didn’t even get a chance to say hello before Mei was shouting in his ear. “I got in, Izu-Kun, I’m going to UA!”

Izuku couldn’t help the grin that spread across his face, “Congratulations, Mei-chan! I knew you could do it!”}

"Well duh, I'm me." Mei comments making her new squad giggle, snicker, and smirk in amusement.

{Mom looked very confused and Izuku suddenly realized that in his post-exam depressive haze, not only had he almost forgotten about giving Mei his number, but he’d also completely forgotten to tell Mom that he met Mei at all! He’d been so depressed when he came home after failing the practical that he’d gone straight to his room, and then he’d spent the rest of the wait trying not to think about it, especially since he was never going to see her again if he didn’t make it into UA. Now he had to explain who this random girl was to his mom. *Awkward.*}

"Did you tell your mom *anything* about our entrance exam?" Ururaka asks.

"Honestly, I kind of dissociated most of the time between the exam and getting the letter." Izuku replied.

"Dissociated?" Todoroki remarks.

"Numb, empty, static in my mind," Izuku takes a moment "I didn't get a single villain point in our exam and I didn't know about rescue points so I thought I failed."

"That sounds tiring." Iida replies softly

"It was."

{He pulled the phone away from his mouth and spoke quietly, “Mei-chan is…” well, Mei was acting like they were friends, but he still didn’t want to assume anything, “We met at the entrance exam.”

“Ah…” Mom nodded in understanding, but still seemed a little nervous.

“What about you, Izu-Kun?” The question made Izuku tune back into Mei’s ramblings, “Did you pass? Because if you didn’t I’m gonna march straight into UA and tell them that…”

“No!” Izuku screamed but then realized that could be taken the wrong way, “I mean, no, please don’t do that Mei-chan. I got in. Apparently, my final was just a formality and they didn’t actually expect me to succeed.”

“I told you so!” Mei cackled,}

"You dare doubt me!" Mei exclaims with joy causing laughter to surround her.

{_“I knew they wouldn’t fail you! That would be like ignoring my perfect babies! So what class are you gonna be in? Are you gonna be with all the other analysis students?”

“Um, actually, I’m the only one, so they put me in an invention class...” Izuku said nervously, “I’m in 1-F.”

There was a beat of silence and Izuku was just starting to wonder if he’d somehow said something wrong when Hatsume squealed

so loud that he had to hold the phone at arm's length just to avoid going deaf.}

"A real concern when you grow up with a living bomb." Izuku says under his breath just loud enough for his friends to have to hide their laughter.

{Mom kept looking between him and the phone, obviously concerned, "I-is she ok?"

"Um," Izuku shrugged helplessly, "I think she might just be excited."

"I'm in 1-F too!" Mei screamed. "We're in the same class!"}

"What?!"

"No way!"

"Awesome!"

All the while Mei is squealing.

{Izuku blinked in shock for a moment. He was going to have a friend in class! That hadn't happened since...well, it depended on if he was counting Kacchan as a friend. They'd been in plenty of classes together, but it definitely wasn't enjoyable, or at least not as enjoyable as he thought being in a class with Mei would be, so he wasn't sure if that counted. Izuku grinned. He was finally going to be in the same class as a friend! Well, if they were actually friends.}

"Oh my god!" Mei shouts at the screen "We are friends, don't you doubt me on that!"

{"We should do something to celebrate!" Mei declared.

"O-oh?" Izuku held the phone away from his mouth again and glanced at Mom, "Um, would you mind if I went to hang out with Mei-chan? She wants to celebrate us getting in."

Mom frowned for a moment, "Does she want to come over for dinner? If she's your friend, I want to meet her. I could make your favorites?"

"Um," Izuku hesitated. Was inviting her over weird? He couldn't imagine inviting anyone from his middle school over, and

Kacchan would probably laugh at Mom insisting she meets his new friend, but Mei didn't seem like the type to get embarrassed by societal norms like that, so she probably wouldn't care, "I guess I can ask her…"}

"I can't wait to meet your mom and I bet the rest of your friends agree." Mei is quick to inform and the rest eagerly agree.

{Twenty minutes later, Izuku was frantically cleaning the kitchen while Mom started dinner. What if Mei thought their house was too dirty? What if she thought it was in a bad part of town? What if she saw the pictures of four-year-old Izuku in an All Might onesie and never wanted to talk to him again? They were in the same class, he'd have to be careful to always sit on the other side of the room, or maybe behind her so she didn't have to see his face. Was it safer to take the pictures down? Yes, definitely safer to take the pictures down. Oh no, that was a knock. Too late! Abort Mission!}

"Izu-Kun, I can call you that now right, of course, I can," Mei enthuses "your overthinking is both adorable and concerning."

"Yeah." Izuku sighs.

{They both ran to answer the door, but before Mom could open it, Izuku suddenly grabbed her hand, "Um, before you meet Mei, I kinda need to warn you about something…"

Mom looked worried, "Does...does she have tattoos or something?"

"No, nothing like that." Izuku said frantically. "It's just...she calls her inventions her babies."}

"He's just mentioning that now?" Twice wonders *"Should have kept it to himself."*

"Would have been so funny!" Toga giggles.

{"Why would you need to warn me about…"

Izuku opened the door before she could finish and immediately got an armful of excitable Mei-chan, "Izu-Kun! This year is gonna be so much fun!"

"Um," Izuku willed his face to go back to a normal color as he

pried her away from him, “Mei, um, this is my mom. Mom, this is Mei-chan.”

Mei’s eyes lit up and she ran up to Mom, practically vibrating with excitement, “It’s awesome to meet you, Midoriya-san. Your son and I are gonna make so many beautiful babies together!”}

"Oh god, Mei phrasing!" Izuku chokes out as Ururaka tries not to laugh.

"I'd have to agree." Iida comments as Tsu and Todoroki hold back mirthful smiles, and all the while their Mei cackles at her other self.

{Mom immediately choked and stared at her in shock before she connected the dots. She visually relaxed and sighed in relief, “Oh, *that’s* what you meant, Izuku. I see why you warned me. And yes, Izuku seems to be looking forward to working with you too.”}

"Damn Mamadoriya's pretty chill." Kirishima comments.

"Auntie's always been that way," Bakugo informs "I don't think I've ever seen her angry either."

"So manly." Kiri grins back at him.

{“Good!” Mei grinned. “I’m so excited to see what babies I can make with your son’s awesome brains. Did you teach him how to do that?”

“Um,” Mom still seemed a little overwhelmed by Mei’s energy, “what?”

“I think she means my analysis, Mom.” Izuku came to her rescue, “Or did you mean the hacking?”

“Both!”

“Oh, um, analysis has always been Izuku’s hobby, really. Even as a kid, he was looking at quirks and writing notes about them. I didn’t even know what he was doing until he showed me his first notebook.” Mom said. “And besides buying him notebooks and computer classes, it’s all him.”}

"It's good to hear the Green Bean getting the praise and recognition he deserves." Midnight coos.

"Even if he's Nedzu's second coming in that world." Mic mumbles.

{“Wow,” Mei said, “I knew you were smart, Izu-Kun, but that’s something else. You really taught yourself how to make your notebooks?”

Izuku nodded, “I, uh, just always loved heroes, so it just kinda...made sense? I’ve been doing them forever, so the first ones are really stupid and I think they’re probably written in crayon.”

“Cool, my first blueprints were the same! I knew they were blueprints, so I was very particular that I had to draw them with a blue crayon!” Mei grinned and Izuku was pleased to realize that Mom looked more at ease now that she’d had a chance to adjust to Mei’s energy, “So what’s for dinner?”}

"Okay," Headcase calls for attention "before I start the next chapter I'm afraid the new story won't be in rotation until after the fifteenth set of chapters." As everyone starts asking questions and complaining she raised her hand to silence them. "I know you want to get to it right away but it's just not possible." Though put out at having to wait the groups settle to watch again.

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He’s Some Pro...

Is this supposed to be a Joke?

"My internship with the Green Bean!" Ms. Joke squeals.

Chapter End Notes

Why is this chapter an emotional rollercoaster?
Heck if I know, it just came out that way.

Deku? Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Is this supposed to be a Joke?

"My internship with the Green Bean!" Ms. Joke squeals.

{"So, Deku, you ready for your first internship?"

Izuku nodded as Ms. Joke led the way into the agency she shared with several other underground pros. He couldn't believe he was actually going to be staying the week, learning how to be a hero! Yeah, he knew he'd made it into UA, but this just felt more real, somehow.}

"I react that way to everything." Izuku realizes.

"So do I." Ururaka comments.

"It's probably because each milestone means we're that much closer to being heroes, kero." Tsu affirms.

{"Ok, we'll drop your bag off in your room, then our support department wants to meet you."

"Support department? Like the people who make your weapons?"

Joke nodded, "That's part of what they do, but there's more too. The support department of a hero agency provides us with costumes, gear, and weapons, but they also do analysis, help us track down villains, and gather evidence to turn in to the police. Basically, kind of what you've been doing so far. That's why they're so eager to meet you."}

"Just like Cheat Code!" Mei exclaims.

{“O-ok.”

Joke led him up several floors to where they had several small rooms for internship purposes and let him drop off all his stuff before going to another floor and leading him down a long hallway to a dark room filled with various monitors and a team of people Izuku had never seen before.

“Hey everyone!”

“Hey Joke! Who’s the kid?”

“Oh him?” Joke smiled and pulled him out from where he had been trying to hide behind her, “This is Deku!”

Izuku gave a hesitant wave as the team stared at him.

“That’s Deku?”

“I heard Deku was young, it’s just...he’s tiny!”

Izuku shrunk in on himself as the whispers continued. Of course, even *Deku* was cooler than him. He shouldn’t have come. Maybe it wasn’t too late to tell Joke he wanted to go home. He felt Joke put a hand on his shoulder and he looked up at her.}

"No Green Bean," Ms. Joke coos "your gonna do so good."

{She was smiling, “Why don’t you go show ‘em what you got?” She said softly. “Hey, you got any videos Deku here can analyze?”

One of the support team pulled up a video from earlier that day and pressed play before Izuku could even get out his notebook.

“A bullet quirk...but why are the bullets ricocheting like that? They seem to be breaking the laws of physics. Maybe a telekinesis quirk? Is that her quirk or does she have a partner? She doesn’t look betrayed when she’s arrested, so probably no partner then. Most likely she brings along a limited number of bullets, then pretends to have a bullet quirk so people are more wary of her. Still, the speeds she’s able to move them are really impressive…”

“Wow…” Izuku stopped and tried to stomp down his embarrassment at being caught muttering, “It really is Deku…”}

"No shit Sherlock." Dabi snarks.

{“What? Did ya think I’d lie to ya?” Joke laughed.

“I mean, you do have a tendency to pull pranks, so…”

“Ha! That’s fair! But I’m telling ya, the kid’s the real deal. Nearly gave us all a heart attack the first time we saw him though. We were expecting some grey beard, then in walks a baby!”}

"He's 14!" Izuku exclaims causing many to giggle or chuckle.

{The team laughed and Izuku joined in. He really should be used to people being surprised at his age by now, but he still couldn’t figure out why. His analysis really wasn’t that spectacular, they were just being nice.}

"Mastermind would beg to differ." Shigiraki huffs.

"Cheat Code too." Shoji adds offhandedly.

{“So, Deku’s here on an internship and he’s not cleared for combat yet, but I’d like him to have an earpiece so I can talk to him during patrols.”

One of the support team members nodded and fiddled with something for a minute before handing it to Izuku, “That’s a standard Hero Commission earpiece, plus some. It will allow you to talk to the rest of the team, mostly just Joke and then probably one of us, and it will allow us to see your location at all times.”}

"What a great way not to get separated from your internship host." Izuku comments.

"If only it was commonplace." Todoroki laments turning toward Iida.

"Yes," Izuku pointedly stares at Iida "such a shame." Iida refuses to look at either of them. The girls are very confused.

{Izuku put it in his ear and smiled at Joke, who laughed and put an arm around his shoulder, “Looking good, kid! You’re all official now!”

“So Deku,” someone asked, “I have to ask, when and how did you get started on analysis? Who taught you?”

“Well,” Izuku replied, “I first started when I was about four, I…” He was about to say he thought it would help make up for his quirklessness, but he wasn’t quite ready to have all that out in the

open yet, “I thought it might help me become a hero. I had my heart set on it even back then. I guess it worked!” That made everyone laugh, “To answer your other question, no one taught me. I just watched the news and started making notes on what I saw.” He shrugged, “I don’t even want to look back at my first one. I’ve still got it, but I’m fairly certain I wrote at least half of it in crayon.”}

"When we get back can we at least see that first notebook?" Ururaka begs.

"I don't know." Izuku says warily.

"What if the rest of us track down some childhood art projects, kero?" Tsu Proposes.

"I didn't do art when I was younger." Todoroki informs.

"Perhaps your first *theory then." Iida offers.*

"That actually sounds fun." Izuku replies with a warm smile. They all smile back at him; Mei promises to bring her first blueprints along.

{There was complete silence and Izuku turned to see every member of the support team staring at him with open mouths, while Joke simply smiled proudly. What happened, did he say something wrong?

“Oh my goodness…” one of them grabbed a notebook and pen that had been sitting on the desk, “Deku, I *need* your autograph. I don’t care that you’re going to be an underground hero, I just, that’s amazing.”}

"Oh, wow, my first autograph and I'm not even the one signing it." Izuku Chuckles to himself.

{“O-ok?” Izuku looked up at Joke, who nodded, then took the paper, “Do I sign as Deku or my real name?”

“You go by Deku professionally, so I’d probably use that one.” Joke said, “I sign everything as Ms. Joke because no one knows who Emi Fukukado is!” She laughed.

Izuku smiled, “I did.”}

"Dude, your like the god of forbidden knowledge at this point."

Kaminari calls out.

"How'd you know that old nickname?" Izuku says a little too quickly.

"What?" Denki replies. While Izuku pretends not to hear him Bakugo gets him to pay attention again.

{“*You* don’t count.” She ruffled his hair as he signed the notebook and gave it back.

“I’d actually like to ask you guys a few questions while we’re here,” He said.

The head of the support team nodded, “That’s what we’re here for. Shoot.”}

"Not again." Bakugo huffs.

{“So about Ms. Joke’s laugh mask, did you design it or did a support firm? Does it work by focusing her quirk like Present Mic’s directional speaker or does it completely neutralize the quirk? If it doesn’t, can it? How do you…”

They stayed for another hour or so while Izuku asked dozens of questions and the support team asked a few of their own. Ms. Joke just smiled proudly the whole time. She was thrilled to have gotten Deku first for internships, but the other heroes couldn’t argue. She *had* called dibs, after all.}

"Ah yes, the almighty dibs." Ashido speaks with fake seriousness.

"Rivalled only by the sacred pinky promise." Sero adds in the same tone.

{Deku just looked so *happy* . In moments like this, it was hard to remember that no one had ever encouraged him, that he curled in on himself to make himself a smaller target, or that he stuttered and flinched whenever he realized he’d been rambling.

By the time they left the support room, Izuku had filled up half a notebook. In his arms, he held the earpiece as well as a plain black jumpsuit they’d given him. He didn’t have a hero costume yet, so he’d just have to make do with that until he figured out what he wanted. Izuku didn’t even know what he wanted for his hero costume. All his old designs had been heavily inspired by All Might, but that was too painful now and besides, he wasn’t going

to be a hero like All Might.}

"Oof, my heart." Hagakure strains dramatically.

{“Ms. Joke?” He asked hesitantly, “How did you decide on your hero costume?”

Joke hummed and brought a finger to her chin as she thought, “Well, it wasn’t simple and my first costume looked almost nothing like this. At first, I thought I wanted something like a clown, but I just couldn’t get it to work. Honestly, I don’t know exactly what started me on the pirate motif, I just kinda stumbled on the stripes and it kinda grew from there. Besides that, some of it’s functional, like I didn’t start with a bandana, but my hair kept falling in my face during spars in hero training. Same with my gloves. I didn’t think I’d ever use brass knuckles, but the support department at my school suggested them and I found that they really gave me an edge, especially since I had boxing training.” She shrugged, “I guess you just start with something that sounds cool, then it grows from there as you get more experience and figure out what you need. Why? You thinking about what you want?”}

"It hasn't even been a year yet and I've changed my costume *so much*." Izuku comments.

"Remember Todoroki's first costume?" Uraraka asks.

"Please don't remind me of my failures." Shoto sighs. Unfortunately, Mei picked this moment to ask what it looked like, and upon hearing the description immediately began cackling.

{Izuku nodded, “I had some ideas when I was a kid, but my goals are different now. I don’t need to be flashy, I just want to make people feel safe…”

“Except for the villains,” Ms. Joke teased.

“Except for the villains.” Izuku agreed. He hummed, “I wonder...would it be better to have an intimidating costume to scare villains, or something cuter to comfort victims…?”}

"It's about finding a balance between the two really." Midnight comments.

"Though that's easier said than done." Mic adds.

{“Well, for underground heroes, it’s often better to scare the villains. You won’t be doing as much rescue work as heroes like the Pussycats or Thirteen, but that doesn’t mean you can completely ignore how the victims see you, either. I don’t mean to say your costume has to be cute, heroes like Edgeshot can be comforting to civilians while still looking cool.” she shrugged, “I don’t know what to tell you, kid. You kind of have to find a balance. What’s going to look intimidating to villains while comforting civilians?”

Izuku thought for a moment, “If I had to say...I’d almost want to say *epic*. ”}

"Good luck with that Brat!" Shigi snarks.

{Joke laughed, “Well when you figure out how to transfer that into visuals, let me know.”

Izuku smiled. Yeah, epic seemed like a good start.}

//

{“All right,” Ms. Joke put her hands on her hips and looked Izuku in the eye, “here are the rules. Interns are allowed to tag along on patrols, but you *have* to do what I tell you to, ok?" Izuku nodded.}

"Should we make bets on how long it takes for him to break one of these rules?" Midnight teases.

"That's a suckers bet, no point to it." Aizawa grumbles.

{“Rule number one is *no combat*, we’ll probably run into a few villains tonight, but I’m the one who’ll be fighting them. You’ll be staying on the rooftops or in the shadows, analyzing the situation and making observations but not *fighting*, are we clear?”}

"*Please just follow the rules." Izuku whines at his on-screen counterpart.*

{Izuku nodded, but hesitated, “What if you’re in trouble and need help.”

“Then you run and contact the support team. They’ll send another pro to assist me, but you stay away.” She sighed, “I know it sounds harsh, but even if you don’t have a quirk, you could still

get in trouble if you step in. The only times you're allowed to fight are if your life is in danger or I give you explicit permission in an emergency. Even if it weren't the law, your mom would kill me if you got hurt." She laughed, "And then Eraser would find some way to bring me back from the dead just so he could kill me again. But joking aside, do you understand."}

"I don't think Sensei would settle for doing that only once." Koda Quietly mentions.

"You're not wrong." Shoji says back.

{"Yes. If you are in trouble, another pro will be much more help than I would be and I won't have to worry about getting hurt or in trouble." He pouted, "Doesn't mean I have to like it."

Joke laughed again and ruffled his hair, "Don't worry, kiddo, you'll have your license soon enough."

Izuku looked up at her, "So what other rules are there?"

Joke's eyes lit up with mischief, "Keep up!" With that, she ran up the nearest fire escape and onto the rooftops while Izuku scrambled to catch up.

"No fair!"}

On instinct 1A choruses "Life's not fair." startling the rest of the theater besides Eraser.

"Shota, what the *fuck*?" Midnight asks.

"It's true." Aizawa defends and then adds "I didn't teach them to do that."

{Ms. Joke was taking care of her third mugging of the night when it happened. Izuku was staying up on the rooftops like he'd been told, muttering a live analysis of the fight into his earpiece when he sensed someone coming up behind him. It was only years of dodging Kacchan and months of combat training with Eraserhead that allowed him to move out of the way as a spiked fist came crashing down.}

"Oh, that was close." Izuku mumbled.

{"Some hero brat. You're pretty creepy with your muttering, you

know." The villain backed Izuku against the wall and swung his fist back.}

"Oi, shut the fuck up!" Bakugo seems incensed by the villains' words.

{"Deku!" Ms. Joke cried, but the muggers on the street below came at her and wouldn't let her leave.

Izuku flinched, knowing that the punch would hurt, maybe even worse than Kacchan's. When he opened his eyes again, he was staring at the sky. He brought a hand up to his face, expecting blood and pain, but to his surprise he was fine. What happened?

"Hey there, handsome, what were you doing up here in the middle of the night?"}

Midnight squeals "It's me!" in excitement.

{"Midnight?" He said in shock, "Did you knock out that guy?"

The heroine nodded, "Sorry it knocked you out too, but unfortunately my quirk just kinda goes everywhere. But that brings us back to what you're doing on a rooftop in the middle of the night."}

"Is it just me or are you older in that world?" Mic asks.

Midnight takes a closer look at her other self and realizes he's right. "How interesting." she comments

{"Kiddo! Are you ok? Did he hurt you? I am so sorry!" Ms. Joke climbed up onto the rooftop, having finally knocked out all the villains she'd been fighting. She was nearly frantic with worry when she finally saw Deku and Midnight.

"It's ok, Ms. Joke! Midnight saved me just in time!"

"Oh thank goodness!" She turned to Midnight, "Thank you so much. I told him to stay on the rooftops while I fought the villains so that he'd be safe, I wasn't expecting a villain to attack *him*. I don't know what I would've done if he'd gotten hurt…"

"It's really no problem, I only regret that I had to knock him out too." Midnight looked between the two and her eyes widened, "Joke, you didn't tell me you had a son!"}

Both parties sputtered, turning red as their friends teased them, and

the audience breaks into laughter.

{Izuku turned red as Joke sputtered for a moment, “I, he’s not…” Then she got ahold of herself and started laughing, “He’s not my son! He’s my intern! Why’d you think he was my son?”}

"That's a great question!" Ms. Joke laughs.

{“Well,” Midnight replied, “You both have green hair. His is quite a bit darker than yours, but if the father’s hair was black, like say, Eraserhead’s…”}

"That's a good point." Todoroki comments.

"No it's really not." Izuku huffs at his friend.

{Joke turned red and smacked Midnight in the arm, “Shut up, you tease!”

“Ah, but teasing is so *exciting*! ” Midnight purred, “But aren’t you going to introduce me to this strapping young hero?”

Joke put her arm around Izuku’s shoulders, “Of course! Midnight, this is Deku, my intern for this week. Deku, this is the R-rated hero Midnight.”

“Deku?” Midnight was shocked, “Like the analyst?”

Izuku nodded, “It’s nice to finally meet you in person, Midnight. Did you catch the blood villain from the last analysis I sent you?”

Midnight shook her head, “You said the villain was probably a woman, so I handed the case off to Vlad King since my quirk wouldn’t work as well.” She squealed, “You’re Deku! Oh, you’re so *cute*! ”}

"That's me!" Toga shouted "It is me right?! Who else could it be!?"

"I don't know; but could you stop shrieking in my ear?"

"Whoops!" she says with fake guilt.

{“I know, he’s adorable right?” Joke said.

“Adorable doesn’t even cut it! I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone so small and cute!”

“I’m right here…” Izuku grumbled.

“All right, all right,” Joke held up her hands in surrender, “we’ll stop.” She paused, “But you are adorable.”

Izuku groaned and Midnight laughed, “Well then, I’ll let you get back to your patrol.”

“Actually, I think we’re gonna head home. That was enough excitement for one night, thank you very much.” Joke said, “Thanks again for saving him.”

“You’re welcome.” Midnight waved to them as she left, “See you at UA, Deku!”

The two watched her leave before Deku couldn’t contain himself anymore, “That was Midnight! She’s so cool and her quirk is super useful. She uses her theme well too, even if it was controversial when she first came on the scene…”

Ms. Joke smiled and shook her head as Deku rambled the whole way back.}

"Aw, it cut off his analysis of me." Midnight complained as Mic pat her on the back in sympathy.

The chatter quickly subsided as the next chapter began.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out my other react fic **Crossing Izuku** and more to come

Mastermind chapter 8

Chapter Summary

First kill

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

MasterMind: Strategist for Hire

Entrance Exam

{“Are you sure you’re ready for this Mind-chan?”

Izuku just rolled his eyes, ignoring the lump of guilt, excitement, and doubt that had been steadily growing in his gut all day.

“Himiko, you do realize I have killed people before, right?”

“I know *that*, silly, it’s just…” she looked at him softly, “It’s just you’ve never taken a life with your own hands. It’s different than just making murder plans and letting other people act them out. The blood will be on your hands, no one else’s. There’s no coming back from this.”}

"I think he's already pretty far gone." Dabi snarks.

"She has a point though." Twice replies "So ridiculous!"

"Real-time strategy is a lot different from a first-person RPG." Shigiraki adds.

{Izuku took a deep breath and started playing with his favorite knife, “Yeah, I guess you’re right. But,” Izuku’s eyes took on a determined glint, “I think I *need* to do this. I mean, in the eyes of the law, I’m already a killer, so it’s not like it'll save me a prison sentence even if I never do it myself, and...well, I think I need to prove to myself that I can, you know? My whole life, I’ve been

told that I can't do anything everyone else can do, I can't be a hero, I can't be a useful member of society. I can't be human. Hell, my own dad *left* because I was so useless. If I let everyone else do my dirty work forever, then isn't that proving everyone else right? Yeah, I'm smart, but when it comes down to the wire, I really am the useless Deku that everyone's always told me I am." He looked over at Himiko, crouched beside him on the rooftop while they waited for their prey to pass through the alley below, "I want to... I need to *do this*. I *know* that I'm capable of it, I just need to actually, you know, do it. Does that make any sense?" }

"The fact he's had to go to this extreme to prove himself is horrible." Iida comments.

"Seeing someone we know go through all this makes me appreciate the version I got to know." Ururaka adds leaning into Izuku's side.

{"Not really to me, but I've never been one for big ideals." She got a contemplative look on her face, "I mostly just kill people to see them bleed, which other people think is a dumb reason too, so I think that if it makes sense to you, can it really be wrong? I mean, any more wrong than murder is anyway?"}

"I hate that that makes sense." Hagakure huffs.

{Izuku laughed, "That really shouldn't have been as comforting as it is. Thanks, Himiko, you're a great friend."

She smiled, her fangs glinting in the dim light of a nearby street lamp before her eyes brightened in excitement. She grabbed Izuku's shoulder and shook him roughly.

"Mind-chan! Mind-chan!" She whispered, somehow still managing to convey mania as if she were yelling at the top of her lungs, "She's here!"}

"This is gonna be good." Dabi grins.

Mind-chan's first blood!" Toga cheers.

{Izuku focused on the woman entering the alley below them. Hero Name: Glimmer. Sidekick at Uwabami Agency. Quirk: Sparkles. She can refract light to produce a glittery effect around her body that she uses to blind and disorient her opponents. Weaknesses: she is susceptible to the blinding effect of her own sparkles. She uses dark glasses as part of her hero costume to

minimize this effect, but right now? she's coming off a day shift in the dark of night in civilian clothes and dark glasses would just get in the way. Izuku smiled and put on his own dark goggles to shield his eyes before grabbing a pair of throwing knives. }

"Isn't that the retired chick from Cheat Code?" Ashido asks.

"Hey yeah that's her." Kaminari's grin quickly dropped "And we're about to watch her fight for her life."

"I hope she survives, but I don't have a good feeling about this." Sero replies sadly.

{Glimmer cried out as one stabbed her in the shoulder and the other lodged itself in her thigh, preventing her from running away. She instinctively surrounded herself with sparkles but had to shield her eyes with her hand. She reached for her pocket where she kept an extra pair of sunglasses only to receive a swift kick to the hand as soon as she managed to grab them. She could tell by the sound of them hitting the floor that they were most likely cracked and useless. She dimmed her quirk enough that she could still see somewhat. She could just barely make out two figures behind the bright sparkles. One was hanging back, but the other was stalking toward her with knives in each hand. A knife-hand quirk, perhaps. Glimmer shook her head. Not important right now, she needed to focus on staying alive. }

"That poor girl won't ever know what's happened to her." Mt. Lady comments.

"We'll catch him." Kamui Woods comforted.

"When? How long will that take?" Mt. Lady tear's up.

{She launched a punch at her attacker, only for him to dodge at the last second. How? Even dimmed, she knew her sparkles made it difficult to see her movements. It seemed it was her opponent's turn to attack as he ran close to her with a knife and gave her a deep cut on the side of her neck. Her eyes widened in pain and realization as she saw the dark goggles on his face. She stumbled backward, trying to get out of range before he came at her again, thanking every deity she could think of that her hurt leg didn’t give out from the movement.}

"That neck wound is bleeding pretty fast." Ashido whispers.

"She's not going to make it is she?" Kaminari asks oh so quietly. No one has the stomach to answer.

{Glimmer was starting to hyperventilate. She didn't have her glasses and her opponent's gear limited the effectiveness of her quirk anyway. She was also injured and bleeding heavily while she hadn't even managed to land a hit on him. They fought for another few minutes, but for every hit she managed to get in, he gave her another few cuts or stabs. She hadn't been this scared since the first time she'd run into a major villain during her first internship. Her mentor had been there to save her then, but no one was going to come to save her now. She stilled and prepared to stand her ground as a last desperate strategy occurred to her. There was a risk she might go blind, but hopefully, it would incapacitate her attacker long enough for her to run away. }

"Despair hero you won't be walking out of this alive." Shigiraki grins savagely.

"Her blood is so pretty." Himiko whispers in infatuation.

"Not bad for his first time." Dabi compliments.

{She slammed her hands over her screwed-shut eyes and sparkled brighter than she ever had in her life. She had never poured this much energy into her quirk because even with standard dark glasses, this much light could cause permanent damage. She was just about to cut her quirk and run for her life when she felt a knife slide between her ribs. If her eyes hadn't been closed she would have been concerned about how dark her vision was going as her legs finally gave out beneath her and she succumbed to quirk exhaustion and blood loss. }

"He did it." Izuku states quietly.

"He isn't you," Todoroki comforts "please remember that." Izuku doesn't respond as his friends watch teary-eyed in horror.

{Izuku waited for the last of the sparkles to fizzle out before taking off his glasses. He'd had to close his eyes during that last attack, but the glasses Giran had provided him with had done a wonderful job at protecting him. He watched the last bit of life drain from Glimmer's eyes as Himiko came to stand beside him. }

"With his eyes closed! Fuck yeah!" Dabi shouts earning him dirty looks and withering glares from most of the room.

{“So,” she drawled, “That looked like fun. How do you feel?”

Izuku knew that the him of 10 months ago would have probably thrown up at the realization of what he had just done, but all he felt was a sick sense of pride, just like he’d felt that first time that a villain had honestly thanked him for coming up with a plan to kill Mt. Lady.

“I feel good.” He smiled at Himiko as he retrieved whatever knives were still stuck in the hero, cleaning them off and putting them away. “I think I told you when we were planning this that today was the UA entrance exam,” Himiko nodded, “Well, I’ve just been thinking about how proud my bully was when I saw him walking home this afternoon, and honestly, I think I’ve got him beat.” This was like his own personal entrance exam, his own proof that he was a real villain. Izuku liked the poetic irony. It was just as ironic as a hero fanboy growing up to kill heroes because of the words of the number one hero in Japan. }

"Even now he can't help comparing himself to those responsible for his pain." Nedzu speaks solemnly.

"This mindset lends itself to him seeking vengeance." All Might warms.

"Hopefully our other selves catch him before then." Tsukauchi comments.

{Sirens were starting to grow closer, most likely drawn by the bright light of Glimmer’s final stand, but it wasn’t important. Izuku and Himiko had plenty of time to get out of there before anyone else showed up.

“Come on Himiko,” he said, “let’s go celebrate.”}

While the villains chatter away the rest take a moment to mourn for this hero that none of them knew or could hope to save. When the theater settles and steeled itself for the borderline suicidal vigilante in the next chapter an error code flashed on the screen. The entity frantically began searching for a solution call out to those gathered to "talk amongst yourselves" in the meantime.

Chapter End Notes

Next time: Let's Talk

Let's Talk I

Chapter Summary

Review and discussion

Chapter Notes

Chatfic style

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(Teachers/Pros)

Aizawa: Of course, something like this would happen.

Mic: Well it's not like we can do anything about this.

Nedzu: I propose we take this opportunity to review what we've learned so far.

Endeavor: One thing each of these worlds have in common is that child's quirk status, and I'd bet the fifth will be the same.

Hawk: On top of that the catalyst for his different motivations seems to center on the day of that slime incident.

Midnight: And that's when we see the differences.

Hound Dog: Deku took time away from anything heroes and preserved his love for them.

Tsukauchi: Mastermind tried to force himself to keep going and wound up drowning in his bitterness.

Aizawa: Viridian let every negative word he's been told echo on a loop.

Nedzu: And Cheat Code took the time to mourn one dream and search for another.

Mic: Then there's the implication that Bakugo was Midoriya's bully during middle school.

Midnight: Headcase specifically asked us not to blame our people for what we've seen on screen.

Recovery Girl: I can at least confirm Midoriya doesn't have any burn scars.

Nedzu: Regardless unless one of those boys tells us that such things have happened there is nothing to be done.

Hound Dog: Except for setting up counseling for Midoriya's anxiety that *should* have been in his file so I could help him from the beginning.

All Might: I'll ask his mother, but I suspect it was a resource issue.

Ms. Joke: They did admit their middle school was a toxic environment.

Tsukauchi: Which leads to my need to investigate Aldera and follow the leads concerning Giran.

Nedzu: And I will lend a paw whilst I Improve the police cybersecurity.

Mt. Lady: Hopefully before some Mastermind rises up in our world.

Kamui Woods: If that were to happen we would hunt him down.

Mt. Lady: I don't even know why I'm still here! I'm *dead* in one world and unimportant in the others!

Headcase: I would have thought you wanted to see the fate of Mastermind.

Mt. Lady: When did you get here? Did you fix the problem already?

Headcase: You were shouting dear, and I'm running a diagnostic scan so I can only sit and wait.

Death Arms: Can any of us leave?

Headcase: If you leave early your memories of this place won't stick.

Death Arms: Fine by me.

Death Arms has left the Theater.

Backdraft has left the Theater.

Mt. Lady: …ugh! I just...*sigh* Fine I'll stay, but that kid better rot for

this.

Headcase: Wonderful I'll be on my way then.

(League of Villains)

Toga: Mind-chan did so good on his first kill!

Dabi: Yeah he did and that bitch didn't lay a finger on him.

Twice: That last strike was a work of art. **Anybody could have pulled that off.**

Shigiraki: The first of many no doubt. With those blasted entrance exams done with the new school year is about to start.

Toga: And with the school year comes the USJ attack.

Dabi: Damn it looks like Dusty really is gonna meet him next.

Shigiraki: But did Sensei hire him for information gathering or *just* the USJ.

Twice: Good question. **Does it matter?**

Dabi: Speaking of information gathering, how do you think we get our hands on those precious notebooks?

Toga: We should get our hands on one of his classmates' blood.

Shigiraki: The electric dolt seems the type to lose his ID so he'd be our best bet.

And so the scheming continues.

(Bakusquad)

Kaminari: That was so disturbing.

Ashido: Yeah, he's not even trying to be a hero anymore, but he's still competing with his Bakugo.

Sero: Speaking of which, Bro, you good?

Bakugo: Fuck no. I'm an ass, used to be an even bigger ass, and apparently in another life was, or am, bad enough to fucking *scar*

someone I've known most of my life.

Kirishima: But you didn't. We'd have noticed any scars by now, sharing the same changing room and all that.

Sero: Yeah man, it's not like he could hide something like that.

Kaminari: Besides it's not like you'd actually tell him to take a swan dive off the roof.

Ashido: Yeah and you've been getting better, I mean you guys can have an actual conversation now.

Bakugo: *huff* I'm not that much better.

Kiri: Midobro said your middle school was practically hell so UA can help you unlearn all their toxic ideals, right?

Bakugo: Yeah, Yeah, enough with the sappy shit. Don't you have anything better to talk about?

Kami: Nothing more important than a friend, but we'll move on anyway.

Ashido: We're not far enough in to do any real shipping.

Sero: What about Aizawa and MS. Joke?

Ashido: There's a funny pairing I'll give you that, but it's coming off as a, well a joke so far.

Kami: Doesn't mean it'll stay a joke.

Kiri: Should we really be debating our teachers' love lives?

Sero: We aren't, we're debating the love life of someone from another world, totally different.

Bakugo: Sure, keep telling yourself that.

(Dekusquad)

Iida: I propose a discussion surrounding how to best help and support one another, not as fellow heroes in training, but as friends. Though I admit I'm not the best at asking for help.

Uraraka: That's okay Iida, I don't think any of you boys are.

Midoriya: And putting on a fake smile instead of telling us you were disappointed in losing your match with Kacchan was what exactly?

Tsu: First thing we should *all* understand is that it's okay not to be okay, kero. I know I've had my fair share of nightmares about the USJ, the camp, and the raid.

Todoroki: Hosu wasn't any better.

Midoriya: But the NDA we signed means we talk to you girls about it.

Mei: Then talk to each other I rarely sleep 8 hours straight so don't be afraid to call me if you need to chat after a nightmare.

Uraraka: In the meantime, Deku, you have an anxiety disorder, how can we help with that?

Midoriya: I'm not sure what you could do. I've memorized a bunch of breathing exercises, and some grounding techniques, and then there's the physical stuff.

Iida: Then teach us, it will be easier with assistance than alone correct?

Uraraka: Isn't one of the most effective exercises putting their hand on your chest and exaggerating your breathing.

Midoriya: If the touch doesn't cause them to flinch and panic more. Just remember to telegraph your movements and talk through everything you do. It won't guarantee anything but it's your best bet.

Todoroki: What about grounding techniques?

Midoriya: A pretty simple one would be the five senses; 5 of one, 4 of another, 3 of next, and so on.

Tsu: And the physical things?

Midoriya: Physical pressure helps calm anyone, weighted blankets, pressure clothing, and...

Uraraka: Hugs! It's hugs, right!?

Midoriya: *laughing* Yes Uraraka, hugs. Just not surprise hugs.

Uraraka: Right!

Todoroki: Of course.

Iida: Understood.

Tsu: Got it, kero.

Mei: Gonna be honest, I might forget that.

Headcase cheers and calls attention back to the screen ready to continue. Debates peter out as everyone settles readily to continue. And the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: practice and a revelation

This chapter fought me tooth and nail

V:tGG Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

practice and a revelation

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Looking Ahead

{Izuku kept an eye on the clock and put all his books away five minutes before school ended. He saw some of the other students shooting him looks as the seconds ticked away and swallowed thickly. Hopefully he really *had* been getting faster since becoming a vigilante because he wasn't looking forward to what would happen to him if he didn't manage to get away in time.}

"The more I watch of this the angrier I get." Mic growls.

"I know what you mean," Midnight adds "no child should have to *escape* from their teachers and peers."

{The bell was like the gun at the beginning of a race and Izuku was out of the room before most of his classmates had even grabbed their bags. From there, it was just rushing to his locker, then out the door. The only one who could even hope to catch up to him at this point would be Kacchan, but Izuku hoped that his luck would hold and Kacchan would just go home like he'd been doing for the last few weeks. He didn't know why Kacchan seemed to be taking it easy on him, but maybe he'd finally realized that Izuku didn't have any hope of being better than him! Maybe if Izuku kept his head down, then Kacchan wouldn't see him as a threat and he'd keep leaving him alone! It was almost too much to hope for.}

"At least you're not terrorizing him in that world." Sero pats Bakugo's back.

"Anymore." Bakugo grumbles back.

"Hey better late than never, Bro." Kirishima tries, but it doesn't seem to help.

{Mom was at work when he got home, so he sent her a quick text saying that he was going to go watch hero fights as he got changed, then grabbed his slingshot and a few dozen marbles and walked out the door. He needed to get used to his new weapon, considering he'd never actually used a slingshot before, and it might just be his poor self-esteem talking, but somehow he didn't think that the middle of a fight was the best time to practice his aim. Hence why he was going to do some target practice.}

"A wise course of action." Nedzu comments.

"I'll say," Snipe adds "if you gonna wield some'in' you best be knowin' how it's done."

{His first thought was to go to a park, but he didn't want to risk running into any of his classmates. They tried to destroy his things on the best of days, but if they were to see him practicing with a weapon...well, Izuku didn't want to have to go back to the hardware store so soon. Besides, it was probably better to practice someplace secluded anyway because if people saw him practicing with a slingshot and then Viridian started using a slingshot shortly after, then that might be suspicious enough to lead the police to his doorstep and he'd rather not make Mom worry.}

"How is he going to find a place to practice?" Ochako wonders out loud.

"He'll figure it out, kero." Tsu replies.

{So, parks were out. He could go to the woods where he used to play with Kacchan, but he didn't really know if Kacchan still hung out there after school and he'd really rather stay *off* his radar right now, so he couldn't go to the woods. That, of course, left the beach.}

"Isn't the trash beach Mastermind cleaned up in that area?" Ojirou ponders.

"Yeah, that'd be a great place to hide." Hagakure agrees.

{Dagobah beach definitely wasn't as pretty as it had been a few decades ago, but that wasn't really the beach's fault, just like it wasn't Izuku's fault that he was useless. It was just kinda a fact of life. Izuku had been introduced to it a few years ago when he'd tagged along with Kacchan and his friends for an afternoon and they'd walked by it.

Hey, that's where you should live, Deku! You'd feel right at home with all the other trash.}

"How are these kids not considered villains?" Shigiraki scowls.

"Seriously, I've met drug dealers nicer than the cowards." Dabi scoffs.

{He'd kinda been right. Yeah, the beach didn't smell the best since the weird fishy smell of the ocean mixed with the rotting piles of garbage, but the ventilation was okay, so it only took a few minutes for Izuku to stop noticing the smell, but it was secluded and peaceful. There wasn't anyone here to beat him up or tell him to kill himself, it was just him and all the other useless garbage that people had thrown away. It was nice.}

"He should not be thinking of such things as positives in his life." Tokoyami murmurs.

"He needs something to keep himself going." Shoji counters.

"Don't hate on the silver lining." Dark Shadow chuffs at her host.

{Izuku dug through the piles before he found a piece of sheet metal that wasn't too rusted and set it up against an old washing machine, then stood a few meters back and got out his slingshot. It took him a few tries to figure out how to pinch the marble through the pouch so that he didn't drop it, but soon enough he'd lined up his shot and aimed for the dead center of his makeshift target.}

"That's a pretty durable material." Majima considers.

"Thank goodness," Midnight comments "I'd hate for the Green Bean to have a setback right now."

"Or ever." Mic adds.

{Izuku took a deep breath and let go. Now, if he was right, the marble should make a sound when it hit the target, and...well, either his target didn't actually make a sound or he'd missed. Of those two possibilities, Izuku had to admit that the latter was much more likely. He looked in the sand under the target, but couldn't see the marble, so his aim was obviously a bit off. He searched for a full two or three minutes before giving up and searching for a tarp to put behind his target instead. He didn't want the trash piles to eat all his marbles before he even had the chance to practice!}

"You're really resourceful Izu-Kun." Mei comments slightly impressed.

Izuku rubs the back of his neck a little embarrassed "Thanks... Mei-chan?" She beamed at him nodding her head in approval.

{Eventually, Izuku found a tarp that didn't have too many holes in it and draped it between his target and the washing machine, then put down another tarp on the sand underneath it. Okay, now as long as he managed to shoot in the general area of the target, he shouldn't lose his marbles. Not that he hadn't obviously lost his marbles a long time ago, considering he'd chosen to become a vigilante, so...dumb joke, he really should stop trying to be funny.}

"Nah man, that was descent, keep it up." Kaminari comforts.

{He still didn't hit the target on his next shot, but the tarp worked well and caught the marble so he could reuse it. His arms were starting to get sore by the time he finally heard the tell-tale metallic *ding* as he hit the target for the first time and Izuku couldn't help himself as he whooped in excitement and started jumping around, startling a few seagulls that had been trying to find something to eat among the garbage. He flushed with embarrassment before he realized that no one would be annoyed at him for yelling because no one was around, and then he smiled. He'd done it! He'd actually hit the target!}

"Great job!" "You did it!" "Keep it up!" "Congratulations!" Whoops and cheers join the cacophony of the cinema at Viridian's success.

{By the time the sun was setting, Izuku was able to reliably hit his target and the sheet metal was covered in small dents. He was down a few marbles from when his shots had gone wildly off course, but overall, Izuku thought that the afternoon had been a

success. He felt all warm and happy, and if he didn't know any better, he'd almost say that he was *proud*.

If this was how Kacchan felt every time someone told him how awesome he was, then Izuku could see the appeal.}

"Praise is addictive." Momo states matter-of-factly.

{Katsuki didn't know how he was supposed to feel.

He really shouldn't pity Deku. And he definitely shouldn't feel *guilty* for how he treated him. The quirkless fucker deserved it for being so weak, right? So then why did Katsuki feel like he was going to throw up every time one of those extras at school told him to jump off a roof? *He'd* told Deku to jump off a roof! It should be any different if someone else was saying it!}

"Oh my goodness," Ashido squeals "Blasty's getting character development!"

"Shut up, it's not that big a deal!" Bakugo shouts defensively.

No way man," Sero grins "we support removing ones head from their ass."

"With how badly these other versions of you treat Midobro, let us have this." Kirishima pleads.

"FINE!" Bakugo concedes.

{But...was Deku really as weak as all that? When all those heroes had been sitting on their asses, Deku had been the only one to run forward to try and save him. Did that mean that Deku was strong? Or did it mean that Katsuki was weak? Was he even weaker than Deku if he had to rely on a quirkless weakling like that to save him?}

"No Kacchan, neither of us were weak for any of that." Izuku whispers to himself sadly

{No! He *had* to be strong! He had a quirk that let him make fucking *explosions!* He was going to be the number one hero and there was no way Deku or any of those other useless extras were going to stand in his way!}

"That sounds like some indoctrination bullshit." Aizawa comments.

"My investigation of those boys' school cannot come soon enough." Tsukauchi replies.

{He was going to be even better than All Might, but would All Might treat Deku like he had? But, all his teachers knew that he was going to be a hero, and they would have told him if he wasn't acting like a hero, right? They were always going on about how Katsuki had what it took, and heroes were better than everyone else, so he was better than Deku right?}

"Well that explains why we couldn't turn him," Shigiraki realizes "he's not a naturally bad kid he was raised by bad people."

"Maybe in that world, but he acts worse in the others." Toga comments.

"So far." Twice chimes in. *"They're all the same."*

{So why did he feel so bad? At first, he'd just thought that sludge must have just been making him nauseous or something because there was no logical reason for him to feel this way. He was strong, he obviously wasn't doing anything wrong!

But...what if he was?}

"You are in the wrong." Jiro snaps.

"But he's learning." Momo comforts.

{Katsuki threw off the covers and went to his computer. He obviously wasn't going to be getting any sleep anytime soon, he might as well do something productive. He found himself looking up how to be a hero. There were obviously the articles that he'd read a million times before about how to apply to hero schools, what it took to get a license, and all that crap, but that wasn't what Katsuki was really looking for. He frowned before typing something else into the search bar.

How is a hero supposed to act?}

"Knowing what kind of person you want to be and taking steps to become that person is a feat few can follow through on." Hound Dog informed.

"With Bakugo's work drive I'm sure he'll figure it out." Aizawa affirms.

{He clicked on a video of All Might and rushed to put the headphones in so that he wouldn't wake up his dad. The hag slept like a rock, so he wasn't worried about her. The interview was a few years old, and All Might grinned as he sat across from the host, the couch sagging under the weight of his massive muscles. The host looked like a baby in comparison, but it was always possible they were smaller than normal because of their quirk.

"So All Might, I know that a lot of kids dream of being a hero like you." The host began.

"As well they should!" All Might laughed. "It's a difficult career, and it's definitely not for everyone, but if you have what it takes, it is extremely rewarding!"}

"Ain't that the truth." "Jelly legs for days." "No more noodle arms."

{"Exactly! And we all know how physically grueling heroism can be, but what about emotionally? All Might, what do you think it takes to be a hero at heart, even for those that will never get a license?"

"Hmm, that's a good question." All Might paused for a moment as if he was thinking. "I think a hero is someone who gives others hope. They lift others up at every opportunity and encourage them to be better! The people we heroes defend will almost always be weaker than we are, if this wasn't the case then everyone would defend themselves and heroes wouldn't be the essential career they are today, but it is our responsibility to make sure they find their inner strength and become the best people they can be."}

"We'll do that!" "That's the goal!" "We won't let you down!"

{"What about heroes like Endeavor, who have been known to look down on their fans?"

"I can't speak for every hero, of course, but I personally wouldn't have gotten to the number one spot if I spent my time and energy insulting my fans." Katsuki froze as All Might turned to look at the camera and it felt like he was staring right into his soul. "A hero isn't someone who insults others. A hero is kind and comforts people in the midst of disasters. My mentor once taught me that if a person is in need of saving, that means they are going through the worst day of their lives. If you insult them rather than save them with a smile, are you really, truly saving them?

Or are you making the worst day of their lives even worse? That's why I believe a hero should always strive to be kind, make others happy, and give them hope. That is what truly makes a hero!"

The interviewer laughed and moved on to the next question as the studio audience applauded the nation's symbol of peace and Katsuki was left to stare at his reflection on the screen as it went dark as the next video in the playlist loaded.

Crap.}

"Talk about a rude awakening." Dabi snarks. The rest of the theater rumbles with support and speculation. Happy about this development it takes some time to quiet the room and begin the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: He's a dick

CC:SS Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

He's a dick

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Friends

{“Bakugo Katsuki and Izuku Midoriya, please report to the principal’s office, Bakugo Katsuki, and Izuku Midoriya.”

Izuku froze in his seat as the classroom exploded in whispers at the announcement. He hesitantly looked over at Kacchan but whipped his head down to look at the floor the second he saw the death glare that Kacchan was leveling at him. Why were they being called down to the office? And together? Was this about…? No, it couldn’t be about the teasing. They’d never done anything about it before, so there wasn’t any reason for them to do something now, especially now that Kacchan had gotten into UA’s hero course.}

"That investigation into Aldera can't come soon enough." Aizawa growls.

"If it makes you feel better I can add you to the arrest team." Tsukauchi suggested.

"Appreciated." Aizawa confirms.

{So that meant that Izuku was probably in trouble for something, but what? And why would Kacchan have to come too? Izuku gathered his things and walked out into the hall, careful to keep a few steps behind Kacchan so he didn’t think Izuku was trying to

get ahead of him. Unfortunately, his efforts to not make Kacchan angry were in vain, because as soon as they'd turned the corner, Izuku found himself being slammed against the wall.

"What is this about, Deku?" Kacchan growled. "What did you do?"}

"God damn it!" Bakugo complains "Watching myself be an asshole is getting old real fast."

"At least in Viridian's world it looks like you'll be getting better." Kaminari cheers.

"It'll probably take a bit though." Sero counters a little perturbed.

"And we're here for it!" Ashido insists.

{"I don't know, I swear!" Izuku held his bag securely against his chest so Kacchan couldn't grab it, his eyes flicking down to the smoke billowing from his hand. "Let's just go, we p-probably shouldn't keep the principal waiting."

Kacchan clicked his tongue dismissively, but released his hold on Izuku and kept walking toward the principal's office. Izuku took a deep breath to steady himself before hurrying after him, leaving a larger gap between them this time so he'd have a bit more warning if Kacchan decided to confront him again. When they got to the office, Kacchan knocked on the door and shot a warning glare back at Izuku before the door swung open.}

"Why is he such an ass?" Uraraka scowls.

"Reasons." Izuku dismisses politely.

{The principal was a man who really seemed too young to be balding, but that didn't stop him. Izuku had been to his office a few times in the past, none of which had necessarily been pleasant, so the smile on the principal's face didn't do anything to put him at ease. In fact, it made the whole thing more unsettling, because Izuku honestly couldn't think of a single reason why he'd be called down to the office if he wasn't in trouble.}

"Well isn't that telling?" Dabi snarks.

"Hey Dabi~" Toga sang sweetly "Can you burn down a school for us?"

"For the hero kid?"

"No, silly, for Mind-chan."

{“I just wanted to be the first person from our school to congratulate the both of you.” The principal said. “I can’t believe we have not one, but two students from our school will be attending UA! And to think you’re one of them, Midoriya. It’s honestly a miracle.”}

"That fucking quirkist bitch!" Jiro snapped; Yaomomo doing her best to calm the girl as others quietly seethed.

{Izuku gulped as he felt the heat of Kacchan’s glare on him. Or maybe it was literal heat...had Kacchan activated his quirk? He wouldn’t do that in the principal’s office, would he? Would the principal let him get away with it?

He didn’t know why he’d assumed he’d be lucky enough to not have anyone at his middle school know he’d made it into UA. It had been so nice these past months with nobody knowing about his new dream, but of course, Aldera had to have been sent their exam results. He’d been even more of an idiot for somehow not preparing for the eventuality of Kacchan finding out! They were going to be attending the same high school, they’d run into each other eventually, even if they were in different courses. Well, there was nothing he could do about any of that now.}

"You really just figured you'd pretend you didn't exist for a while didn't you?" Mei asked snickering.

"If only it had worked." Izuku sighs in exaggeration.

{Izuku forced a shaky smile onto his face, “Thank you, sir. I hope we’ll make you proud.”

The principal nodded and gestured for them to leave. Izuku stood awkwardly for a second, waiting for Kacchan to leave first, but he just kept glaring at him until Izuku finally gave in and scurried toward the door. He just wanted to go back to class and pretend that the principal hadn’t known exactly what he was doing by calling both of them into the office at the same time. He wanted to pretend that his new dream was still safe. He wanted to pretend that Kacchan was like Mei and was excited that they’d be going to the same school, rather than enraged.

Instead, reality grabbed him roughly by the arm and dragged him outside, taking him straight to an alcove behind the locker rooms that didn't have any cameras. At this time of day, even if Kacchan let loose explosions, no one would be on the other side to hear them, which also meant that no one would be around to hear Izuku's screams. Not that they'd help him if they did hear, but it was the principle of the thing.}

"Does that school even have security cameras?" Midnight asked.

"Would they even use them if they did?" Mic counters.

"Nedzu will find out as soon as we get back." Powerloader affirms.

{Izuku couldn't hold back a sharp cry as he was shoved against the wall for the second time in ten minutes. Kacchan glared down at him and this time Izuku knew that the heat wasn't just from his glare as he felt the skin on his chest blistering where Kacchan's hand was holding his shirt, "I thought you'd given up on being a hero, nerd."

Izuku trembled as he realized he'd never actually seen Kacchan this angry before. This...this was bad. Even worse than usual. What would happen if Kacchan killed him? Would they give his place at UA to someone else? Would Mei find someone else to make inventions with? Would anyone even notice he was gone?}

"Stop it!" "Of course, you'll be missed!" "I want my other self to meet you!"

{"I bet you've had a great time laughing behind my back these past couple of months, haven't you?" Kacchan sneered. "Pretending to have given up, when really you were lying to us the whole time! How'd you even pass the exam, you damn nerd?!"

"I…" Izuku hissed in pain as Kacchan let loose an explosion to his chest.

"I was supposed to be the first and *only* student from this crappy school to make it into UA, and you had to go and ruin it!" Kacchan yelled. "Well, I hope your fun was worth it because it's over Deku! I don't care if you somehow cheated and made it into UA, you're not gonna be a hero!"

"I'm in the support course, Kacchan!" Izuku yelled.

He was trembling from the pain, the anxiety, and now the emotional exertion it took to yell at his oldest friend, “I didn’t lie to you, Kacch...Katsuki. I gave up on being a hero months ago. I didn’t even try the hero course exam like you did, so don’t get angry at me for chasing a dream that doesn’t even affect you!”}

"You tell him!" "Way to go!' "Preach!"

{He grabbed the arm that was holding him against the wall and shoved it away, then ran as fast as he could away from the school. He’d undoubtedly get in trouble for skipping class, but they wouldn’t risk suspending him or punishing him too drastically now that he’d be attending UA. They wanted positive attention too badly for that. Maybe that was why they’d let Katsuki get away with everything they did because he was the student with the greatest chance of making it big.}

"They care more about their reputation than their students?" Hawks asked incredulously.

"And that, right there, *is* their rep." Mirko scoffed.

{Izuku could hardly see through his tears as he ran home on autopilot, shooting a text to Mei for her to call him when she had a minute. He didn’t know what he’d say if she called, he just...there were too many emotions for him to process alone. Thankfully, Mom was at work, so he didn’t have to worry about her seeing him barge through the door with tears running down his face as he went straight to the bathroom to bandage the ugly burn on his chest.}

"Even in this world where their relationship is improved, he hides his injuries." All Might sighs sadly.

{To his surprise, Izuku’s phone rang just as he was about to take off his uniform. He looked at the screen to see Mei’s name on the caller ID, “Shouldn’t you be in class right now?”

“I told the teacher that I’d accidentally added an unstable component to my cell phone battery and it was going to explode if I didn’t answer a call right away.” Mei said. “I’ve actually done that before, so they didn’t question it.”

“You’ve...actually blown up your phone by accident?” Izuku asked numbly.}

"More than once!" Mei laughs proudly.

{“It wasn’t a very large explosion.” Mei dismissed. “But what’s going on? Your text sounded really upset and now your voice is doing that weird chokey thing it does when you’ve been crying!”

Izuku tried to hold back a sob, but it tore itself out of his chest anyway, “Everyone at school found out I’m going to UA.”

There was a beat of silence at the other end, “Isn’t that a good thing? Shouldn’t they be happy for you?”

“No, you don’t understand, I’m quirkless!” Izuku yelled, then immediately felt like a bucket of ice water had been dumped over his head as he realized what he’d just said. He hadn’t meant for her to know that. He hadn’t...and he’d been looking forward to having a friend, “I’m sorry. I...I’ll just let you go, you didn’t need to leave class and you don’t have to call me again, I’m sorry….”}

"Oh *hell* no." Mei and Uraraka chorus and then grin at each other.

{“Oh no! Izuku Hacker Midoriya, don’t you *dare* hang up on me!”

Izuku stopped with his thumb halfway to the end call button, “Did...did you just use *hacker* as my middle name?”

“Well I don’t know your real one, and I needed a placeholder to get the full effect.” Mei explained. “So, Izuku Hacker Midoriya, don’t you *dare* think that I’m gonna abandon all the amazing babies we’re gonna make together, just because you have some extra toe joint or whatever. I know for a *fact* that you’re smarter than that, so I don’t want to hear it!”}

"And this is why you're in the Dekusquad." Uraraka comments with pride; the others smile and agree readily.

{Izuku’s jaw dropped and he gaped at his reflection in the mirror, “I...what? You...you’re still talking to me?”

“Obviously.” Mei huffed. “So did one of your bullies get mad because you made it in?”

Izuku put his phone on speaker so he could focus on treating his burn, “I don’t know if “bully” is the right word. We used to be best friends, so it sounds so wrong to call him anything other than that, but...well, we haven’t really *hung out* since his quirk came in,

so…”

“That was ten years ago, Izu-Kun.” Mei said bluntly.

“What?”

“That was ten years ago.” Mei repeated. “If you haven’t hung out in ten years, you’re not still friends.}

Izuku sucks in a harsh breath and swallows thickly. His friends go to comfort him or figure out what's wrong, but he can only shake his head silently.

{Did he hurt you?”

Izuku hissed in pain as his shirt pulled away from the burned skin, “Today?”

Mei made a little exasperated noise, “Ever!”

“Um…” Izuku looked at the angry red burn in the mirror, “define *hurt*.”

Mei groaned, “For someone who is so smart, you really are an idiot. Are you in pain right now?”}

"Don't you lie to her." Mei scolds at the screen.

{“If I say no, are you going to believe me?”

“Not a chance in hell, Izu-Kun.”

Izuku grimaced, “Then yes.”

Mei sighed, “I’m gonna kill him. He did that just because you got into UA and he didn’t?”}

"If only." Todoroki murmurs quietly, though the squad hears him anyway.

{“Oh no, he got in too.” Izuku ran a washcloth under cold water. “He’s in the hero course, that’s part of why he’s so angry.”

“They let your bully into the hero course?!” Mei yelled so loudly that the audio on the phone crackled.

“Like I said, “bully” isn’t really the right word.”}

"Yes, yes it is." Ojirou huffs in exasperation.

{“Just because you were friends once doesn’t mean he’s not a bully, Izu-Kun.” Mei said, then continued more quietly. “It also doesn’t mean you deserved it.”

Izuku’s hands stuttered to a stop from where he’d been gently patting the washcloth to his chest, “What?”

“You don’t deserve the way he treats you, Izu-Kun.” Mei said. “What’s his excuse? That you don’t have a quirk? Not your fault! Try again!”}

"Sing it!" "What she said!" "Listen to her!"

{“Um…,” Izuku thought for a moment, “until about a year ago, I still wanted to be a hero despite that?”

“Not a crime.” Mei said. “Tons of kids want to be heroes! Try again!”}

"Damn straight!" "Hell yeah!" "You tell him!"

{Izuku was starting to smile in spite of himself, “I kept complimenting his quirk, which he somehow interpreted as me thinking I was better than him?”

“...I’m not even gonna try, this guy’s an idiot. Next!”}

Whoops of agreement continue to call out as Bakugo goes red at being thoroughly *roasted*.

{Izuku laughed, “Um...I kept following him around like a lost puppy?”

“Anyone would be lucky to have your brilliant mind behind them.” Mei said. “Any other complaints?”}

"So true!" "I know I'd be happy with that." "Couldn't agree more!"

{Izuku hesitated. He knew that it’d probably make Mei laugh, but it felt almost blasphemous to say, “He’s a dick?”}

And the room explodes in cheers and laughter supporting Cheat Code's assessment of his old 'friend'.

{“Ding! Ding! Ding!” Mei cackled. “We have a winner! For real,

though, Izu-Kun, that guy is a jerk and if he ever comes to me for babies I'll…ugh, I'll…"

Izuku wasn't sure he actually wanted to know, "You'll what?"

"I'll use cheap materials!" Mei blurted. "No, I can't do that, my babies deserve only the best. Ugh, I'll figure it out, but it won't be pretty!"}

Izuku laughs as he thanks Mei for her support.

{Izuku laughed, "Thanks, Mei, that means a lot."

"So, are you feeling any better?"

Izuku shrugged as he spread burn cream on his chest. It was definitely going to scar, "I don't know. I just wish he hadn't taken it so personally, you know? I wasn't even trying to get into the hero course!"

Izuku's sadness had slowly been pushed away by Mei's enthusiasm, and it was quickly being replaced by something he wasn't used to letting himself feel. Anger.

"Couldn't he just let me have this *one thing* without ruining it?" Izuku ranted. "I mean, he already made sure I *knew* my last dream was a big fat pile of nothing, so couldn't he just be happy with that? Noooo! He has to ruin my new one too!"}

"What is wrong with me?" Bakugo grumbles to himself low enough for no one else to hear.

{"Then don't let him!" Mei said. "It's your dream, not his, so that *bully* doesn't get any say. You're gonna be an amazing support analyst, Izu-Kun, and he can't do a thing about it."

Izuku finished wrapping the bandages around his chest and grabbed the phone as he headed to his room to pick out a t-shirt, "I don't know. It *feels* like he can."

"I know…" Mei said. "But, hey! Now you have me, and we're friends, and I'm not gonna let you give up! We're gonna take UA by storm and that guy is gonna regret ever hurting you, ok?"

Izuku chucked, "Ok."

"Good." Mei said resolutely. "Now, did you find anything else out

about that jet quirk from the exam? My hover-boot babies are having problems staying in the air…”}

As the screen fades out Headcase calls for a good night's rest. After a calm night in comfy beds returning to the theater in soft pajamas, everyone settles in for another session of chapters. Once all are still and ready the next chapter begins to play.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Why 'Deku'?

All Hail The Bones Day!

Second-day dealt with

D?ITHSP... Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Why 'Deku'?

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

What's in a name?

{“Come on, kiddo, we’re gonna be late!” Ms. Joke called behind her as Izuku scrambled to catch up.

“If you want me to keep up, maybe you could take some of my bags?”

Joke just laughed but grabbed the duffel bag from Izuku’s outstretched hand. To celebrate the end of Izuku’s first preschool internship, they were going to dinner with Eraserhead, Mr. Brave, and even Sir Nighteye. Izuku was having trouble wrapping his head around the fact that the heroes *wanted* to hang out with him. They seemed to genuinely enjoy his company which was...strange. Even before Kacchan had gotten his quirk, hanging out with him had required a fair bit of posturing, walking on eggshells, and telling Kacchan how amazing he was.}

Bakugo groans at the reminder of his childhood self's actions.

{Hanging out with the heroes wasn’t like hanging around Kacchan. The heroes teased one another, but they didn’t mean to hurt each other. They laughed, joked, and talked about each other’s interests. The heroes had never cut off one of his mumble storms by telling him he was annoying or creepy, instead adding interesting insights and asking Izuku to speak up. The worst that had happened was the one time when they were in the middle of

a meeting and they told him that they needed to move on, but that they'd like to hear his ideas later.}

Izuku's eyes sparkle at the thought and his friends make a mental note to themselves to do the very same.

{On the one hand, Izuku was the happiest he'd ever been, but however much he tried to ignore it, fear was bubbling just beneath the surface. *It won't last. They'll grow tired of you soon enough. They'll realize how weak you are and then they'll hate you just like everybody else.*

Izuku shook his head and followed Joke into the 24-hour diner they were meeting at. Eraser insisted they go there because of everyone's patrol schedules, but Izuku knew that he probably just wanted to avoid being around a lot of people. But it worked out with everyone's schedules, so they were going to dinner at 10:00 at night, and then Ms. Joke would take Izuku back home and he'd spend a week with his mom before his next internship with Mr. Brave.}

"Imma give him weapons." Brave claims enthusiastically.

"Please don't give him knives." Aizawa sighs.

"I have no control over what he's given." Mr. Brave says innocently, earning himself a cold glare.

{They were apparently the last to arrive since the others were already sitting in a corner booth. Mr. Brave was telling a joke to Sir Nighteye, who was chuckling softly while Eraser brooded with a cup of coffee and tired energy that was making the waitresses steer clear. When they saw them, Mr. Brave waved energetically and Sir Nighteye simply nodded. Eraser didn't acknowledge them, but downed the rest of his coffee and looked slightly less broody than before.}

"Aw, that's the softest he's ever looked." Hagakure quietly celebrates.

"Yeah, just don't let him hear you say that." Ojirou warns.

{"Hey everyone!" Joke said loudly as she pushed Izuku into the booth and slid in after him, "How was your week?"

"The same as every week, Joke," Eraser grumbled, "You were the only one with anything interesting happening."

Joke laughed loudly, “That’s fair! I guess I am really spoiled, after all, I had Deku *all week long.*” she bragged.}

"It's so surreal to watch heroes compete over me." Izuku mentions.

{Mr. Brave rolled his eyes, “Yeah, yeah, we heard you the first dozen times.” He turned to Izuku, “She’s been bragging non-stop that *she* got the first internship, just because she called dibs.” He rolled his eyes, “It’s like she’s forgotten that *he’s going to intern with all of us!*” He called the last part at Joke, who simply stuck her tongue out at him while Izuku giggled.}

"It's good to see the kid loosening up a bit." Ms. Joke grinned.

"I know, it's so *refreshing*." Midnight agrees.

{“So how was the internship, problem child?” Eraser asked.

Izuku beamed, “It was amazing! I got to watch Ms. Joke fight and see how she used her quirk to take down the villains. I even got to meet Midnight!”

Eraser gave Joke a *look*, “You took a fourteen-year-old to meet the R-rated heroine?”

“She...ran into us while on patrol, and besides you know she isn’t *that* bad. They do let her teach at UA, don’t they?”

Eraser sighed and Izuku continued, “I got to hang out with the support department too. They were a lot of fun and they gave me a real hero commission earpiece too!”}

"Oh my god!" Ashido cheers "He's so excited it's adorable!"

"I'm excited just watching it!" Kaminari adds.

"Then maybe you should pipe down so we can keep watching." Bakugo growled sardonically.

{“You should have seen them when I told them he was Deku,” Joke smiled proudly, “They couldn’t take their jaws off the floor after they saw his skills in person. One guy even asked him for an autograph!”

Izuku turned a bright red while the others laughed and Eraser patted his shoulder consolingly, “That’s tough, kid. You’re already famous enough to sign autographs and you’re not even in high

school yet."

"I'm not famous," Izuku grumbled, "Only heroes really know I exist."}

"That's more than some can say." Monoma grumbled.

{Mr. Brave shrugged, "Maybe not, but among heroes, you've got quite the reputation. We're all waiting with bated breath the day that Deku becomes an official hero."

Their food had arrived by that point since the others had ordered for Joke and Izuku before they arrived, and they all started to eat.

Nighteye looked at Izuku, "That reminds me, why did you choose the name Deku as your hero name?"

Izuku looked surprised, "Deku's going to be my hero name?"}

Izuku snorts "Yep!' he chirps laughing a bit.

{The others just looked at him and Eraser sighed, "Yes, problem child. It's kinda too late to change it now since you've made all your connections with the name Deku and everyone knows who you are. That's how I got stuck with Eraserhead. I honestly didn't really care what I was called, so when we had to choose at the beginning of internships our first year, I just went with the first thing out of Present Mic's mouth. Then I got a reputation during my internship and the name stuck. Sorry if you wanted something else kid, but that's the way the world works."

Izuku nodded, "I guess that makes sense, I just hadn't thought of it like that."

"You definitely chose an interesting name," Nighteye said, "It means *useless*, doesn't it?"

"I thought it was like dekiru," Joke said, "You know? *I can do it*! Because if anyone can do it, Deku can." Izuku blushed.}

"Okay, Ms. Joke is my spirit animal in this story." Uraraka comments offhandedly; while Tsu and Mei laugh a little, Iida and Todoroki are very confused, and Midoriya facepalms at the similarities.

{"I thought it was supposed to be ironic," Brave spoke up, "like *it's useless to resist* or something like that."

Izuku laughed, “Not really, I’d never thought of it like that!”

“So…” Eraserhead prompted, “Why did you choose the name Deku?”

“It’s what my bullies called me because I was quirkless.”

Izuku was busy taking a drink, and so was oblivious to the looks of shocked horror on his friends' faces.}

"I agree with your looks of abject horror." Aizawa deadpans, causing Mic and Midnight to snort.

{Brave was the first to speak up, “Deku is an insult?”

Izuku nodded, “My best friend gave me the nickname when we were four because it’s an alternate reading of Izuku and I was useless now because I didn’t have a quirk. Pretty much everybody calls me that now, even the teachers.”

“We’ve been calling you by an insult all this time.” Eraser said angrily, “Why didn’t you say anything? Why did you tell us to call you that?”

Izuku played with his food for a minute before responding, “The day you asked if I had a codename was...a really bad day. I’m usually ok at ignoring all the voices that say I’m not good enough but…” he shrugged, “At the time, I thought you guys deserved to know exactly who you were working with, that I was just a worthless Deku who would never be of any use to anyone.”

The heroes stared at him for a moment. It had never crossed their minds that Deku was using the name literally. They had never thought that maybe Deku called himself that because that’s what he thought. Eraser wanted to find everyone who had ever hurt him and make them undergo the same psychological torture that Deku had been subjected to for years.}

"Ah yes, phycological warfare, a personal favorite of mine." Nedzu grins sharply. Shivers are commonplace among the teachers and Pros around him for a moment.

{“We can change it!” Joke said. The others nodded, “It would take a lot of work, and normally I’d say it’s more trouble than it’s worth, but if it’s an insult…”

“Yeah,” Mr. Brave added, “You shouldn’t have to go by such a hurtful nickname for the rest of your career.”

Izuku shook his head, “Thanks guys, but really, it’s ok.” He sipped his drink thoughtfully, “I don’t think I mind it as much anymore. At first, it was really hurtful, but people have been calling me Deku since I was four and I’ve gotten used to it.”

“You shouldn’t have to be used to it,” Eraser said angrily, “We’ve been insulting you for months.”}

"Intention makes all the difference between a nickname and an insult." Izuku states firmly before Uraraka can question herself again.

{Izuku looked at him in confusion, “But it’s not an insult when you guys say it.”

They stared at him for a moment and he sighed, “You guys don’t say Deku like it’s an insult. I can’t explain it, but it’s something in your tone of voice when you talk to me. To you guys, it’s just a name. I know that you guys respect me, so I don’t feel useless when you say it, I feel...” he hesitated, “appreciated. I feel like you guys have taken something I hated for years and turned it on its head so that it means something completely different than it was meant to be. It makes me feel powerful to know that I’ve taken even my old insults and made them my own. Does that make any sense?”}

"You got one tough kid there." Gran Torino comments gruffly.

"I'm lucky to have met him," All Might pauses in thought "I hope my other selves learn that," he takes a second before adding "except Mastermind."

{There was a long moment of silence before Izuku yelped as Joke enveloped him in a hug. Brave and Nighteye didn’t hesitate, standing up and moving around the table to hug him as well.

“Get in here Eraser!” Joke glared at him and Izuku started laughing and crying at the same time.

Eraser just returned a glare of his own, “No.”

“Just get in here and join the hug!” Nighteye said.

Eraser sighed heavily and rolled his eyes in defeat, but wrapped

his arms around Izuku and the others. They stayed there for a few minutes until Izuku managed to stop crying. Could anyone blame him, though? Izuku beamed and wrapped his arms tighter around the heroes he was proud to call his friends.}

As many coo and tease at the sappy scene the next chapter begins to load. Quickly quieting and going tense as the villains grow excited.

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Caught

"Thank goodness." Tsukauchi sighs in relief.

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: A Raid

MM:SFH Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

A Raid

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Caught

"Thank goodness." Tsukauchi sighs in relief.

{Tsukauchi checked his gun one last time and radioed the heroes who were coming on the raid, “Everyone in position?”

“Ready.” Eraserhead responded. He was waiting in the rafters of the warehouse, hidden in the shadows. The current theory was that Mastermind had some sort of analysis quirk, but there was always the possibility he could have something more offensive, so they couldn’t be too careful.}

"Boy are they in for a sweet surprise." Dabi grinned maniacally.

{“Ready.” Kamui Woods had insisted on being part of the raid. He and Mt. Lady may have stepped on each other’s toes, but they had been friends. In his mind, Mastermind might not have wielded the knife that killed her, but he was still responsible for her death.}

"Thanks Kamui." Mt. Lady smiled sadly.

"What did I tell ya? we got this." Kamui says proudly.

{“Ready.” Nedzu stood beside Tsukauchi. It wasn’t often that he physically came on missions, but he was the only one that could match Mastermind in intellect, just in case it wasn’t something Eraserhead could erase.

Eraserhead's informants had caught wind of the deal a few days ago and plainclothes officers on the scene had confirmed that Mastermind had entered the warehouse 20 minutes ago. Tsukauchi took a deep breath to calm his nerves. It'd be over soon.

"Move in!"}

"Why do I have the feeling he just jinxed us?" Aizawa deadpans.

"The chapter is called 'Caught', it's a safe bet." Mic defended.

"And when is anything that straightforward?"

"I guess you have a point." Midnight replies a little more worried.

{Izuku was unimpressed. This group of drug dealers was hardly worth the trouble of meeting with, but Giran had vouched for them, so he'd given them the benefit of the doubt. But seriously? All they wanted to do was make sure a rival group stopped encroaching on their territory. Kill their men! Send a message! Hiring a professional strategist was just redundant. He sighed. These guys were idiots.}

Endeavor snorted "Most criminals are."

{All of a sudden, the warehouse exploded in movement as dozens of cops came pouring in and restraining the drug dealers. Izuku cried out as he was wrapped in...branches? He swore. Heroes. A loud voice came from a megaphone outside.

"Mastermind, this is Detective Tsukauchi from the Japanese Police Force. You are under arrest for accessory to multiple murders and other crimes. Do not resist."

Izuku chuckled desperately as his mind raced for a way out of this situation. The heroes had gotten the drop on him, but...he knew better than anyone that every hero has a weakness. He slumped and bowed his head, hiding his smile as he felt Kamui Wood's lacquered chain prison loosen slightly. He silently thanked his bullies for teaching him how to pretend he'd given up, all while reaching in his pocket. His knives wouldn't do much good against this current opponent, Kamui would be able to grow his branches much faster than Izuku would be able to cut through them, but he had a lot more tricks up his sleeve. He grinned as his hand finally

grasped what he was looking for, good thing his costume was flameproof.}

Gasps ring out as the theater takes in a collective harsh breath.

{Kamui Woods screamed as his branches were charred and he reflexively let go. Izuku hit the floor in a roll, but still didn't let up his grip on the miniature flame thrower, instead targeting Kamui's main body. He made a break for the back of the warehouse and laughed as he felt triumph radiating from the police thinking they'd managed to corner him. He took a grenade from one of his pockets and pulled the pin before throwing it at the wall. Just because there wasn't a door back here didn't mean he couldn't make one.}

"Fuck yeah!" Dabi cheered.

"Go Mind-chan!" Toga shouted.

{"Shit! He took out Kamui and blew out the back wall! Head him off! Quickly, before he gets away!"

Izuku vaulted over the rubble into the back alley behind the warehouse and looked around to decide which direction to run. If he went left, he'd run right into the arms of the police. He turned right but felt his body wrapped up for the second time that night.

"Fuck!" He swore under his breath. Of course *this* was how he got caught. What would his mom think? He supposed he should have expected something like this after how quickly he'd risen through the villain ranks. How did the phrase go? The faster they rise, the quicker they fall? Something like that?}

"Get him sensei!" "Don't let him go!" "You're done for, Mastermind."

{Izuku desperately looked around and saw Eraserhead staring at him, hair floating around him like some kind of devil's halo. If he hadn't been so scared he would have laughed that they sent *Eraserhead* after a quirkless kid. As it was, he couldn't suppress a deranged giggle and the hero looked at him with suspicion.}

"Well that's not creepy." Jiro comments sarcastically.

{"What's so funny? You can't use your quirk and you can't get away. Just give yourself up."

This just made Izuku laugh harder because now he knew how to escape. Eraserhead wasn't used to people fighting back after their quirks were taken away, and unlike with Kamui's branches, Eraser's scarf was easy to cut through. Eraserhead reared back at the manic look in the villain's eyes as he looked up and didn't see how he grasped a knife in each hand. He made quick work of the capture weapon and threw one of his knives at Eraserhead. The hero managed to dodge only to be blinded by a bright flash as soon as he turned back to look at his opponent. By the time he could open his eyes again, Mastermind was nowhere to be seen.}

"No, damn it, Kamui better be okay!" Mt. Lady cries out beginning to sob at her murderer's escape and her friend's peril. Kamui puts his hand on her shoulder to remind her he's still there.

{Izuku watched from the roof as Eraserhead looked around for him before heading into the warehouse. The heroes and cops would start canvassing the area soon, they'd probably already set up a perimeter. He crept to the other edge of the roof so he could see where the police were gathered. Most were still clearing the warehouse or loading the drug dealers into police cruisers, but some were having to hold back the crowd that was starting to form as people from a nearby shopping district rushed to see what all the commotion was about.}

"He's right there, someone see him!" Tsukauchi growls in frustration.

{Izuku smiled as an idea occurred to him and he slipped off his mask and took off his jacket, folding it to look like a bag. He quickly gathered all his knives and weapons and placed them inside his jacket. It might have looked weird in the middle of the day, but under the cover of darkness and chaos, he just looked like a kid who'd been out a little too late with friends. He shimmied down the fire escape and took out his phone, setting it to record right as he came into view not too far from the police line.}

"He looks like some stupid kid." Izuku sighs.

"I think that's the point." Todoroki agrees.

"And they were so close too." Uraraka adds.

{"Hey, kid! You're not supposed to be back here!" An officer rushed to him and grabbed him roughly by the arm.

“S-sorry, o-officer, b-but I heard there were heroes, and my friends dared me and…” Izuku lifted his phone helplessly as the officer rolled his eyes.

“Don’t be stupid kid, there’s a dangerous villain out tonight, the police line is there to protect you. You and your friends can get autographs at Hero Con.” And with that Izuku was escorted outside the police line with firm instructions to never do something like that again. Izuku stayed with the crowd for a few minutes, watching Nedzu talk to Tsukauchi, who looked more tired with every officer or hero who came to talk to him.}

"Please tell me someone has the foresight to record the crowd." Tsukauchi hoped.

{An ambulance had been called for Kamui Woods and the media had started showing up by the time Izuku left. No one paid a second glance to a plain-looking boy making his way away from the chaos and he made it home without incident. He crawled through his window and drew a shuddering breath as the stress finally hit him. Tears leaked from his eyes and he wiped them away in frustration. It seemed that being a feared villain didn’t make him any less of a crybaby.}

"Aw, Mind-chan." Toga whined in sympathy.

{That had been too close. If he hadn’t had his flamethrower, or if they’d sent different heroes... Izuku cut off that train of thought before it could paralyze him. He still needed to lock away his villain gear and shower away the dust and soot that was sticking to him from the fire and the explosion.

Most importantly, he needed to find a way to make sure this never happened again.}

Headcase lets the break go on a little longer to ensure everyone is calm enough to pay attention to the next chapter. The villains theorize about counter methods for Mastermind to use while others simply refill their food and drink. By the time she calls for everyone's attention, all are prepared for what comes next.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Dadzawa

V:TGG Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Dadzawa

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Parkour

{Shouta had never really understood the appeal of bars. He supposed that Yamada or Shirakumo probably would have dragged him along when they got old enough if they had actually started their own agency as they'd always planned, but...well, Shouta just thought it was irrational to dull his senses with alcohol and loud music when there was work that needed to be done.}

"You really think about him a lot don't you Sho?" Mic asks sadly.

"You say that like you're any different." Aizawa replies ruefully.

{Which was what brought him here, overlooking the bar district while partiers enjoyed the nightlife. Amplifier had only been out sick for a day or two, but since the last trigger incident had been in her territory, Shouta had asked for her permission to stick around and look for any leads. He'd been hanging around for almost two weeks and, while he'd managed to find a few small dealers, there hadn't been another major incident.}

"Yet." Aizawa huffs.

{Shouta heard Amplifier's voice echoing from a few streets over and he sighed and started running in that direction. It was probably nothing she couldn't handle, but he may as well lend a

hand as long as he didn't have any of his own leads to chase. As he got closer to the fight, however, he almost stopped in shock. He wasn't the only one who had shown up to the fight.}

"Cue the Problem Child." Eraser sighs.

{Crouching on the rooftop, eyes glued to the fight below, was Viridian. The kid had a small notebook out and Shouta wondered how he could even see what he was writing in the sparse light. It couldn't be good for his eyes. He could see the kid's lips moving as well, so he was probably muttering something, but the words were drowned out by the sound of Amplifier's quirk.}

"She'd be really helpful for stealth and distraction tactics for team-ups." Izuku comments excitedly.

{The kid had also gotten some more gear, apparently, which alleviated some of Shouta's worries that Viridian wouldn't be able to defend himself. He had added a belt to his costume, which held his tin can and a couple...sticks? Hopefully, they were more durable than the ones he'd tried to use the last time Shouta had run into him. There was also a slingshot hanging from one of the loops, and Shouta nodded in satisfaction. At least the kid had enough sense to cover his long-range defenses.}

"A touching compliment from someone such as our teacher." Tokoyami nods sagely.

{He decided he'd watched long enough, he should get Viridian to give him an overview of the situation since he'd most likely been the one to lead Amplifier to the fight in the first place, "Does she need any help?"

Viridian yelped and clutched his notebook to his chest as he turned around with panic in his eyes. Shouta snorted, "Seriously kid? I would think a vigilante would have more situational awareness. How do you manage to sniff out crimes as well as you do if you couldn't even tell I was behind you?"}

"Really Sho?" Midnight scolds

{"W-well, E-Eraserhead sir, um, you are one of the most stealth-based heroes out there, and Amplifier's quirk is based on volume, so you probably used her quirk to cover your own approach, unless that's not what you were trying to do, but then again, I guess I was kinda distracted watching the fight and…"

Shouta rolled his eyes as he went to the edge of the roof and looked down. Amplifier had stopped yelling and seemed to be comforting the victim as a group of thugs struggled weakly on the ground, “You lead her to this one?”

Viridian nodded frantically, “The guys were drunk and I didn’t want them to hurt that girl because she was alone and I really didn’t like the way they were looking at her and…”

Shouta cut off the kid’s rambling, “Good work kid.”}

Class 1A smile at the rare compliment their teacher gave out to the little vigilante.

{Viridian gave him a bright smile, like Shouta had congratulated him on saving the world rather than just one girl, and practically started vibrating with excitement, “T-thank you, Eraserhead sir!”

“Like I said before, kid, it’s just Eraser.”

“Oh,” Viridian’s face fell and Shouta hoped he was imagining the glimmer of tears behind his goggles, “I-I'm sorry, E-Eraser…”}

And the smiles fell to worry, knowing how much worse this version of their friend sees himself.

{“It’s not a big deal, kid.” Seriously, he hadn’t been expecting Viridian to be so emotional. What was up with the kid? He hadn’t actually done anything wrong. Well, he hadn’t if Shouta ignored the whole vigilante thing, but there was nothing actually wrong with calling him by his full hero name. So why had a simple correction been enough to move the kid to tears?}

"Come on, you have enough context clues, figure it out." Aizawa tells his other self in frustration.

{Maybe he should change the subject, “So, what were you writing?”

Viridian quickly hid the notebook in one of the pouches on his belt, “Oh, um, nothing?”

Shouta shot him an unimpressed look, “Really, kid? If you’re going to lie, at least come up with a better excuse. Let me see.”

“It’s really nothing!”

Shouta raised one eyebrow.

“It’s just...my notes are silly and kinda embarrassing.” Viridian finally muttered. “It’s just some thoughts on the fight so I can figure out what Amplifier was doing and maybe do something similar in the future. I mean, it’s nothing special, I know it’s kinda creepy.”}

"Somebody give this boy a hug!" Hagakure cries out.

{Shouta raised an eyebrow at him, “You’re learning by example, that’s smart. I wish my students had half that drive.”

Viridian’s head snapped up and he looked at Shouta with wide eyes, “You’re a teacher?”

Shouta snorted, “Yeah, I expel brats at UA. Maybe if you actually stay off the streets, you could actually be in my class in a few years.”

Viridian looked at the ground and started fidgeting with the sleeves of his hoodie, “Do you teach the hero course students?”

“Yes…” Shouta looked at Viridian curiously. “I teach the first years.”

“Then I won’t be in your class.” Viridian shook his head. “I...I can’t be a hero.”

“Why…?”}

"That's a loaded question." Dabi huffs a laugh.

{“Bye, Eraser! See you later!”

Viridian started scrambling down the fire escape even though the roofs were close enough together that it’d be easier for him to parkour away. Shouta thought fast and wrapped his capture weapon around one of Viridian's wrists. He stopped and Shouta could feel how hard he was trembling just from the way his capture weapon moved.

“Kid, do you not know parkour?”

“P-parkour?”

Shouta rolled his eyes, “Yes kid, parkour. You know, running

across rooftops without dying? It's pretty essential in this line of work."

"Um," Viridian had started fidgeting with his sleeves again as soon as Shouta released the tension on his weapon, "I don't...no? I mean, I guess I've considered it, but I've never really learned, so...no?"

Shouta sighed, "Follow me."}

"Is sensei about to teach this random vigilante parkour?" Sero asks rhetorically.

"That's what it looks like." Kaminari answers anyway.

{He made his way down the fire escape, waving to Amplifier as they passed her, and was pleased when he saw that Viridian had actually started following him. He really should be working on finding leads, but it didn't look like anyone else was going to put in the work to make sure this kid didn't die.}

"Oh no," Midnight exaggerates "how could *nobody* help the *adorable* little lawbreaker."

{It didn't take them long to reach a skate park a few streets over. It was practically abandoned at this time of night except for a few homeless people and drug dealers, but as long as they left each other alone, Shouta wasn't going to worry about them.

He turned around, forcing Viridian to stop quickly to avoid running into him, "Alright, first thing's first, you have to learn how to fall."}

"That always sounds so bad." Sato comment.

"But it's so important." Koda agrees.

{"Um...I thought the point of parkour was to not fall…"

Shouta gave him a deadpan glare, "No. the point is to not get hurt when you fall. You're always going to fall, especially early on, and that's why you have to start small." He gestured to the park. "Places like this are a good place to practice early on because you don't have that far to fall. Tonight, though, I'm just gonna teach you how to roll."

“You…you’re going to *teach* me?!”}

"He's just too cute." Amplifier coos.

"I know, it's hilarious." Joke adds.

{Shouta rolled his eyes, “Yes, kid, I’m going to teach you. Why else would I have led you here?”

Viridian shrugged, “Catch me?”}

"I mean, fair." Ojirou comments.

{Shouta sighed again, “Not tonight kid. Little known fact is that we heroes, especially underground heroes like me, often prefer to work with vigilantes than against them. If you get overly violent or turn to villainy, that’ll change pretty quickly, but for right now, we’re good. Just don’t tell the cops, they’re a little more uptight about the whole thing. Alright, now like I said, you’re always going to fall. Rolling is a good way to make sure that your momentum gets dissipated gradually so that it doesn’t hurt your body. You don’t get hurt by moving fast, you get hurt when you suddenly stop moving.”

That made Viridian chuckle, which Shouta decided to count as a win considering he’d made the kid cry earlier, “We’re not going to start from on top of a wall, you’re not ready for that right now, but just watch me.”

Viridian cried out as Shouta dove toward the ground, tucking his arm under him so that he rolled over his shoulder and landed back on his feet, “That’s a basic roll. Now let’s go slow and I’ll talk you through it.”}

"You kids better be paying attention to this." Aizawa reminds the students.

"Yes sensei!" They chorus altogether.

{Shouta spent the next hour coaching the kid on some of the basic movements of parkour and giving him some exercises that would give him a decent foundation. The kid was obviously unused to the movement, but he was a pretty fast learner, all things considered. Occasionally, Viridian would stop to adjust the tools on his belt so that the weight didn’t get in his way, or he would take out his notebook and write something down before

putting it away again. Shouta couldn't help but be a little curious about it, even though the kid had told him it was nothing.}

"That's good considering it's not even close to nothing." Jiro snarks.

{"You should take notes on villains too." Shouta said as Viridian reached for his notebook yet again after Shouta had taught him a new movement. "Taking notes on heroes is good, so you can learn what they do, but knowing what villains do is arguably more important."

"Hmm," Viridian finished writing what he was going to and put the notebook back in his belt, "but you don't fight repeat villains all the time, and everyone has unique quirks, why does it matter how a particular villain fights?"

"Think about it, kid." Shouta sat down on one of the low walls and gestured for Viridian to sit next to him. "Yeah, you might not ever come across that exact quirk again, but take Present Mic and Amplifier. Their quirks might not be identical, but…"

"But they're similar enough that what works against one might work against another…" Viridian said slowly. "So the more I understand different villains' quirks, the more strategies I'll be prepared to fight with!"}

"I've never thought about that." Izuku comments a little excited about the new possible project.

{Shouta nodded. At least the problem child was quick on his feet. Not that Shouta didn't already know that, considering that he'd won his first fight with literal garbage. "You'll also get better at looking for weaknesses. Right now, because you're trying to emulate heroes, you're automatically looking for people's strengths, when what you really need to be focusing on is their weaknesses."}

"Yep! Already on it!" Izuku says noting the advice in his notebook.

{Viridian had pulled his notebook back out and was apparently taking notes on everything Shouta said. Now he really wished the kid was one of his students. Shouta glanced at his watch and stood.

"You'd probably better get to bed, kid, don't you have school tomorrow?"

Whatever eagerness Viridian had been showing only moments before disappeared as the kid seemed to shrink in on himself, almost like he was trying to make himself a smaller target. Why…?}

The people could only cringe at the knowledge they can't share with the on-screen Eraserhead.

{“Goodnight, Eraser. Thank you for your help! Sorry for bothering you!”

He almost stopped the kid from running off again, but by the time he realized Viridian was going to run, he was already around the corner. Damn, he knew the kid was fast, but seriously? He sighed and made his way back to the rooftops. He’d wasted some time, but he couldn’t bring himself to regret it.

After all, an extra set of boots on the ground couldn’t hurt, right?}

The crowd settles pretty quickly for the next chapter hopeful for Cheat Code's progress.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: We aren't friends

CC:SS Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

We're not friends

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Katsuki

{Izuku did his best to stare straight ahead and not give into the temptation to hunch his shoulders in an attempt to make himself a smaller target. As he predicted, the news that he got into UA had spread like wildfire since yesterday, though Izuku didn't know if that was Katsuki's fault or the principal's. The moment he'd arrived, Izuku had felt dozens of eyes on him, and even now after half a day, his classmates just wouldn't stop staring. Some seemed angry, like Katsuki, but most simply thought he was lying for attention.}

"I can't wait to be done with this stupid school." Jiro snaps.

"I wonder if the teachers will let us help take it down." Momo ponders aloud, side-eyeing the girl with a mischievous smile.

Jiro responds with a menacing smirk "One can only hope."

{"Worthless Deku. He's just gonna drag UA down."

"Do you actually think he got in? Someone in my science class said it'd be possible to forge an acceptance letter if you were stupid enough to try."

"Even if he did get in, it's not like he's gonna stay there, right? UA is for the best and the brightest, so I bet they'll expel Deku on the first day."}

"That's only a risk in the *Hero* course!" Powerloader says absolutely scandalized earning a glare for the resident expulsion expert.

{Izuku actually kind of wished they'd actually say what they wanted to his face instead of whispering it as he walked by. It wasn't like they didn't know he could hear him, so really, it'd just be easier if they were upfront about it, if only so Izuku didn't have to feign ignorance. Maybe part of the reason Mei was so easy to be friends with was because she was so upfront about things. She might have a weird way of saying things, but Izuku was almost certain that she'd never lie to him, even to spare his feelings. If he asked her, she'd most likely say something about incorrect data making for bad inventions, but at least Izuku could trust her. Probably.}

"Definitely." Mei corrects.

{Izuku sighed in relief as he walked out the front doors, grateful to finally be away from his classmates. It was only a couple more days until the end of the school year, and then he'd start UA with Mei, so he could handle it until then. He could handle it. He'd already gone through so much worse.}

"Freedom!" cheers Toga, much to the dismay of the others.

{He didn't run into any hero fights on his way home, so maybe he wasn't paying as much attention to his surroundings as he should have been and it came as a surprise to him when he turned a corner only to see Katsuki leaning against the wall, backed by two of his cronies. When Katsuki saw him, his eyes narrowed, but he didn't explode. Izuku froze momentarily before forcing himself to relax. It wasn't his fault that Katsuki was mean, he just had to keep reminding himself of that.}

"Good, at this point he doesn't deserve you." Sero comments. Bakugo tenses but doesn't say anything.

{Katsuki pushed himself off the wall and glowered at Izuku, "Where the fuck did you go yesterday, you damn nerd?"

Izuku did his best to channel his inner Mei as he responded, "I went home, Katsuki. That tends to happen after one gets cornered behind the school, but of course, you wouldn't know a thing about that, would you?"

He was prepared to dart away the moment Katsuki's cronies gave

him an opening, but they were flanking him on either side and Katsuki himself was blocking his way forward. Izuku had been expecting him to explode at his last comment, but to his surprise, Katsuki was quiet. It was terrifying. Izuku knew how to deal with a screaming Katsuki, he even knew how to deal with an exploding Katsuki, even if that almost always ended up with him getting hurt, but this? This was new.}

"Bro, do you know what's going on?" Kirishima turns to Bakugo.

Katsuki replies with his eyes glued to the screen "He didn't call me *Kachan*."

{It wasn't that Katsuki wasn't angry, but that anger was simmering beneath the surface in a type of cold rage and some other emotion Izuku couldn't place. Maybe confusion? Was Katsuki confused about Izuku talking back to him? Or maybe he didn't understand why he'd gone home yesterday? There wasn't much point in thinking about it right now, because ultimately, it didn't matter. What mattered was that Izuku got away from here before he got hurt again.

"Well," Izuku forced a wobbly smile onto his face, trying his best to imitate Mei's confidence, "um, if that's all you wanted to ask me, then we should all probably be getting home."

Katsuki looked at him intensely for a moment before scoffing, "So, are you some sort of shitty inventor now or something?"

It took Izuku a moment to realize that Katsuki was talking about the support course. Of course, he'd made the same assumption that Izuku had at first, but he didn't really know if it was smart to let Katsuki know anything more than he had to about his new dream, "What's it to you? You're going to be a hero, Katsuki, I'm not. Isn't that good enough for you?"

"I told you not to apply!" Katsuki growled.}

"Selfish bitch." Dabi snarks.

"And that's coming from us." Shigiraki agrees.

{Izuku felt a swell of anger and recognized the feeling from his phone call with Mei yesterday. It wasn't his fault that Katsuki was a jerk, so it wasn't his responsibility to avoid setting him off, "I'm not one of your cronies, Katsuki. You don't control me."}

"You tell him!" "Stand your ground!" "That's right!"

{A few small explosions popped in Katsuki's hand, but instead of being afraid, all Izuku could think about was the fact that Mei had apparently accidentally blown up her phone at least once. Hope mingled itself with his anger. Maybe if he hung around her enough, explosions would take on a different meaning. Maybe eventually, he'd come to associate them with friendship and acceptance, rather than disappointment and pain.}

"Hell yeah!" Mei cheers excited by the thought.

{Izuku squared his shoulders, "Katsuki…"

"What the fuck is up with that, Deku?" Katsuki interrupted. "Why the hell are you calling me Katsuki all of a sudden? I thought you were still using that stupid nickname."

Izuku took a step back. For some reason, he hadn't realized that Katsuki would even notice the change. He was just a pebble on the side of Katsuki's road to greatness, so what did it even matter what Izuku called him? But apparently, nothing that Katsuki did made any sense. He was angry when Izuku called him Kacchan, and he was angry when he didn't. There was no way for Izuku to win, and honestly, he was sick of trying.

"People have nicknames for their friends, *Katsuki*." Izuku said lowly. "And we're not friends anymore."}

"Finally he said it!" Monoma sneers.

{Katsuki glared at him, but Izuku held his ground. He wasn't going to look away first. He wasn't going to let Katsuki win this one. Eventually, Katsuki scoffed and stepped aside, "Whatever, Deku. Like I care what you do."

Izuku gripped the straps of his backpack and walked past him, tense as he anticipated an attack from behind. Katsuki, however, seemed just as tense. He might be pretending like he didn't care and that was why he was letting this go, but Izuku knew the truth. He had won. It filled him with an unfamiliar sense of victory and accomplishment that he'd only ever experienced when analyzing or hacking. It gave him the confidence to stop walking a few steps past Katsuki and turn around. Maybe it was petty and more than a little stupid, but Izuku wanted the last word.

“Oh, and Katsuki?” Izuku smiled slightly as they made direct eye contact. “I’m not going to be a shitty inventor. I’m going to be a shitty *analyst*. Turns out, some people actually *like* my creepy stalker notebooks.” He turned and started walking away, promising himself that he’d have a panic attack when he got home, “See you at UA, Katsuki!”

Katsuki didn’t follow him.}

The theater claps and cheers at Cheat Code's success looking forward to the analyst's journey as they prepare to watch the quirkless hero-to-be.

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

The Baby has Acquired a Knife Somehow!

"God damnit Brave!" Eraser shouts as Brave and Joke just laugh.

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Mr. Brave and Weapons

D?ITHSP... Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Mr. Brave and weapons

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

The Baby has Acquired a Knife Somehow!

"God damnit Brave!" Eraser shouts as Brave and Joke just laugh.

{Izuku groaned as Mr. Brave used his hair like a whip to flip him onto his back. Again.

“Ugh. This just isn’t working!” Izuku stared up at the ceiling piteously, “I’m pretty good at hand-to-hand combat if I can get in close, but your quirk allows you to keep me at a distance. The way you can use your hair as a weapon even when it’s detached means I can never get close to your actual body. The only way I could plausibly defeat you would be to completely destroy all your hair and then attack you, but I’d be exhausted long before that’d be a possibility.” He rolled over and propped himself up on his elbows, “What do you think I should do Brave?”}

"Flamethrower!" Mei cheers.

"Mei-chan no!" Izuku responds horrified as the villains laugh.

{Mr. Brave ran his hand through his hair, “Hmm, well, I haven’t ever run into that problem because my quirk is good for both ranged and close combat, but...maybe it’s time you start learning weapons?”

Izuku’s eyes widened, “Really?”

Brave shrugged, “I don’t see any reason why not. You were gonna have to learn how to use weapons and support items eventually anyway because you don’t have a quirk, so we may as well start now. Let’s talk to the support department, see what they’ve got lying around for you to try.”}

"You're a weapons specialist, what *doesn't* your support department have?" Aizawa deadpans.

"Good question." Brave replies curiously making it obvious he doesn't often practice without his quirk.

{Izuku failed miserably as he tried not to be overwhelmed as he stared at the buffet of weapons on the table. There were quarterstaffs, tonfas, knives, swords, guns, grappling hooks, grenades, and some things that Izuku couldn’t tell what they were for the life of him.}

"Do you think UA has weapons classes?" Kaminari asks.

"Probably." Sero comments.

"I think I heard a rumor it's part of our second year," Ashido gossips.

"Yeah, but what would we even do?" Kirishima wonders.

"I'm gonna add brass knuckles to my gauntlets." Bakugo comments.

"Hey yeah, since you already fight with your hands they'll be perfect for you." Kaminari compliments.

"Especially when there's something like a gas leak that would make your quirk extra dangerous." Sero considers.

{“Now you’ll probably want something for ranged combat and something for close combat,” Mr. Brave said.

Izuku nodded, “Like how Eraser has his capture weapon to keep people with mutant quirks at a distance but also has a knife if he needs it.”

“I mean, I think he mostly uses his knife to cut his capture weapon if it gets caught,” Mr. Brave said thoughtfully, “But you’ve got the right idea. The goal is just to be safe and to make sure you have options for every situation. It’d probably also be good for you to learn how to use things like flash grenades and

smoke bombs as well so that you can run away from fights you're not ready for, especially while you're on your internships." He looked at Izuku, "So Deku, are you ready to try some of these babies out?"

"No." Izuku shook his head and sighed, "But I want to do it anyway."}

"Story of my life." "Mood." "Same." "Ditto."

{Brave laughed, "That's the spirit! What do you want to try first?"

Izuku awkwardly picked up the quarterstaff and gave it a few experimental twirls.

"Nice pick," Brave yanked a few strands of hair from the back of his head and grew, twisted, and hardened them until he was holding a black quarterstaff about the same size as the one Izuku had chosen.

Izuku stared wide-eyed at the process, "Do you know how to use it?"

Brave nodded, "At least a little. Back when I was in school, I realized that I could use my hair to make basically any melee weapon I wanted, within reason, so I learned the basics of as many as I could. I prefer swords, myself, but," He shrugged, "What can you do?" Then he charged.}

"When getting the opportunity to wield weapons ourselves we should take the time to ensure they fit us well." Iida chops.

"Whatever I get it will need to be temperature resistant." Todoroki mentions hesitantly.

Izuku winces "Right I'd be hard to use weapons that shatter in one use."

{Izuku tried to block Mr. Brave's attack but ended up awkwardly fumbling his staff, tripping over it as he tried to retreat, then hitting himself on the head as he fell. Brave dropped his staff to hold his gut laughing as Izuku glared at him, rubbing his sore head, "Shut up. It's not as easy as it looks! I think I'm too short for a quarterstaff, anyway."}

Chuckle and laughter fill the theater.

{Brave just held up a finger as he took a few minutes to compose himself. After a minute or so he sighed, “Ok, I’m done. But really, you can’t expect to be amazing at a weapon the first time you hold it. Weapons mastery takes time, just like other skills, and it’s always going to be painful at the beginning. That being said, you want to enjoy the feeling of the weapon you choose because otherwise you won’t want to practice it and you’ll never learn.”

Izuku sighed, “I think I want to try something else if that’s ok…”

Brave nodded and helped him up from the floor. They ended up spending the next few hours with Izuku trying all the weapons available with varying levels of success and Brave using his hair to make weapons of his own to fight back. By the time they were almost finished with the close-combat weapon options, Izuku was frustrated, tired, and sore.}

"Understandable." Ojirou nods.

"I know right." Hagakure adds.

{“Alright, Deku, this is the last one.” Brave said, tired himself, “Knives.”

Izuku groaned tiredly but took the knife from the table. Brave made his own and taught Izuku how to hold it before stepping back.

“You ready?” He waited for Izuku to nod before running at him. Izuku pivoted out of the way and slashed, using his dull blade to land a hit on Brave’s arm right where he knew there was a ligament that would make it difficult for his opponent to use that arm if this was a real fight. He smiled at Brave, who used his distraction to knock him on his back again.}

"Dang the little listener has a knack for this." Mic comments leaning toward Eraser.

"I suppose." He agrees begrudgingly.

{“That felt different,” Brave observed, holding out a hand to help Izuku up, “You liked that one, didn’t you?”

Izuku nodded, “I think knives will mesh well with the hand-to-hand I’ve learned from Eraser and will help me target the weak points I see in my analysis. I could have easily cut your hair with

a strong enough knife or given you shallow cuts on your fingers to make it more difficult for you to pull out your hair. I'll have to be careful and study some anatomy so I know what cuts I can make without seriously injuring my opponent but," he smiled brightly, "I think I'm up to the challenge."}

"Writing that down." Izuku says to himself.

{"That's my boy!" Brave clapped Izuku heavily on the back, almost knocking him over, "Ok, let's go on a short patrol. We can work on ranged weapons tomorrow, how does that sound?"

Izuku nodded and they both went to go change for patrol.}

{The next day, Izuku and Mr. Brave were back in the training gym at his agency trying to choose a ranged weapon in case Izuku couldn't get close to his target.

"Midnight uses a whip, right?" Brave asked as Izuku picked one up.

Izuku nodded, "I think she chose it because it fits with her theme, but it would be useful to be able to grab opponents and bring them closer, although I think I'd prefer something like Eraser's capture weapon if that were my goal." He tried to crack the whip, but just gave himself a welt on the cheek, "Maybe I'll come back to this one if I don't find another weapon I like better." He said sheepishly.}

Midnight giggled "Yeah that'll happen the first few times."

{He ended up liking the bow and arrow decently well, but quickly realized that his hand-to-hand would suffer if he had to carry such a large weapon on his back. "I think I'll leave that weapon to Native," he said as he gingerly placed it back on the table, "What else have we got?"

Brave looked over his shoulder, "It looks like we've got some blow darts and shuriken as well as some guns. What do you want to try?"

Izuku thought for a moment, "Well, Snipe uses guns and he varies the kind of bullet he uses based on how much damage he wants to do. He mostly uses rubber bullets and bean bag rounds, but he's also been known to use live ammo and tranq darts."}

"You are not about to give the kid I call *Problem Child* a gun." Aizawa growls in Brave's direction.

Brave responds with a smile saying "He seems like a responsible kid."

{“Ok! We don’t have a shooting range in this building, but the police station does and it’s just a few blocks away. Is that alright?”

It didn’t take them long to arrive, especially since Mr. Brave was in his civilian garb and not many people would have recognized him anyway, so they didn’t have to worry about being stopped for autographs like a daylight hero would. Detective Tsukauchi was standing by the front desk when they arrived and he waved when he saw them.

“Hello Mr. Brave, Deku. How’s the internship going?”

Izuku smiled, “It’s going really well, detective. Mr. Brave thinks it’s time I start learning weapons so I can make up for...everything.”

“Guns seem like a nice option if Deku can’t get close to his opponent for any reason,” Brave said, “We were wondering if we could use the shooting range here, see if he likes them.”

Tsukauchi nodded, “That’ll be fine, you’ll just need to sign some waivers and I’ll take you right back.”}

"Really Tsukauchi, your helping them?" Aizawa asks incredulously.

"Better in a range than that dump Viridian is practicing in." He replies causing Eraser to huff in defeat.

Meanwhile...

"Is it just me or is sensei about to have a conniption?" Jiro jokes.

"He does appear rather perturbed." Momo agrees.

{After they read through the required paperwork, Tsukauchi handed them both earmuffs and led them into the basement where a few officers were already practicing their marksmanship. Tsukauchi grabbed some paper targets from a bin by the door and sent one out about three meters to start, then handed Izuku a pistol.

"Ok, so the first rule of gun safety is to always treat a gun as if it's loaded, even when you know it's not. Basically, don't point the gun at someone unless you're actually ready to shoot them." Izuku nodded and Tsukauchi taught him how to load it and where to put his hands while Brave looked on proudly.

"Ok, now this little piece on the top is what's called a sight. You aim by lining it up with your target, which will become second nature the more you practice. Now Deku, just try to hit the bullseye."

Izuku nodded and took a deep breath, trying to remember everything Tsukauchi had told him as he aimed, then pulled the trigger. He looked at the detective who nodded and gestured for him to fire again. Once he'd emptied his cartridge, Tsukauchi called back the target and Izuku smiled.

None of the bullets had hit the bullseye, but none of them had completely missed the target either. Brave whistled and Tsukauchi smiled, "That's a pretty nice grouping for your first time holding a gun. Would you like to try again?"}

The Pros murmur excitedly about the boy's natural aptitude with the firearm. Aizawa though still apprehensive is silently proud of his student as well.

{Izuku nodded enthusiastically and reloaded the gun as Tsukauchi changed the target. By the time they left two hours later, Izuku had gotten lucky and hit the bullseye twice and set up appointments to come practice twice a week. He massaged the soreness out of his hand as Brave gave the earmuffs back.

"Good work, Deku." Tsukauchi said, "You'll need to have an official firearm certification before you're allowed to carry a gun in the field, but as long as you keep practicing, you should be able to get certified right before school starts in a few months. Either way, you should include the gun in your costume design and the support company will just add it when you're ready."

Izuku nodded and followed Mr. Brave out the door, "Thanks, detective!"

Brave chucked as they left, "Everybody's gonna be so jealous I got to teach you weapons."}

"Not everybody!" Aizawa gripes.

{Group Chat

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

@87657 You gave him a gun?!}

"Uh-oh, sensei is upset." Kaminari teases.

{87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Well…

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Of all the irresponsible things you could have done this week, you gave him a gun?}

"He brought him to a police shooting range how is that irresponsible?" Dabi snarks.

{87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Calm down, Eraser, it's not like I let him keep it! I took him down to the police station shooting range and Tsukauchi was there the whole time. He's gonna help the kid get a certification so he doesn't shoot his eye out. He won't be able to carry it in the field for months, so stop being such a dad.}

Snorts and fake coughing scatter throughout the room.

{12579: *(Eraserhead)*

I'm just concerned and I am not acting like a dad.}

"Keep telling yourself that Sho." Mic teases.

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Actually, you kinda are.

72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

I'm on Eraserhead's side. I support the idea of Deku having

weapons, but are you sure it had to be a gun, Brave?

87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Hey, we tried a bunch of different ones and Deku liked the gun best. He took to it like a duck to water too. It's not that different from the knives he chose for close combat.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

You gave him knives?!?}

Once again aborted laughter can be heard all around.

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

This just in, Eraserhead strives to babyproof the hero industry to protect one (1) smol green bean!

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Shut up, Joke!

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Not until you stop acting like a dad!}

"He couldn't stop it if he tried." Midnight informs playfully earning herself another glare.

{72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

As long as he learns how to use the weapons safely, I suppose it'll be alright. There are a lot of quirks that are more dangerous than guns.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Fine! You win! Deku's got a gun and I'm going back to bed.

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Just wait, the kiddo will show up to class the first day with a gun strapped to his hip and Eraser'll have to choose between being a proud papa and a sour grumpus.}

"Is that any different than he normally is?" All Might asks genuinely confused.

{12579: *(Eraserhead)*

You do realize I'm still here, right?

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Obviously! It's no fun to tease you when you're not here.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

You're insufferable.

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

But you love me!

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

I really don't.

87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

You two, stop flirting and go to bed!}

"You know what?" Ashido asks absolutely no one "I ship it!"

{*87657 has left the chat.*

72598 has left the chat

58726: (Ms. Joke)

You heard the guy! Sleep well, Eraser! Remember, coffee doesn't count as sleep!}

"That's your opinion." Shinsou says off in his own little corner.

{*58726 has left the chat*

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

We weren't...whatever, good night.

12579 has left the chat.}

Theories and plans for future weapons training start as the screen fades. The teachers come up with the best methods and recommendations as the other pros offer guest lectures and their own take on the best fit for each student. The students themselves compare their current styles to what weapons would best fit what they already are capable of. The villains are just messing around waiting for their favorite of these stories to begin once more and paying special attention when it does.

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Hostages

"Fuck!"

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: S-Rank

MM:SFH Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

S-Rank

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Hostages

"Fuck!"

{“What is this damn world coming to?” Mitsuki exclaimed, “Just last night that fucker Mastermind gave the heroes the slip. Put a hero in the hospital too, from what I heard.”

“It’s just terrible! I wish that they’d just catch him already, it’s nerve-wracking every time I turn the news on now. I’m so worried for Katsuki when he starts UA!” Inko fretted.}

"Who wants to tell her?" Toga giggles sadistically.

{“Yeah right, like some weak fucker like Mastermind could beat me!” Katsuki said, “They should have sent stronger heroes to the raid. The reason that hero got hurt was because he was weak!”

“Shut up, brat! Don’t go speaking ill of the injured like that!”}

"Just shut up." Bakugo sighs at his counterpart.

{Izuku played with his food and tried not to react. Dinner with the Bakugos was always difficult, having to act naturally with Katsuki so his ‘friend’ wouldn’t have any reason to kill him, but it was even harder when he was the topic of conversation. Izuku wanted more than anything to smirk and take credit for his crimes, or even kill Katsuki right here and prove that he wasn’t

weak, but he was smart enough to realize how stupid that would be. He'd just escaped a hero raid with his identity intact, he wasn't about to go giving himself away now. It still didn't make it any easier to navigate this conversation.}

"How do you think Kacchan is gonna react when he realizes how close to death he's been?" Izuku asks with a mix of curiosity and concern. His friends aren't sure they want an answer.

{"Well, I'm just grateful that it didn't end up any worse…" Masaru said quietly.

Inko looked at him like he'd grown a second head, "He got away and a hero was injured, how could it have gone any worse?"

Masaru set down his fork and looked at Inko, "According to a friend of mine with the police, a huge crowd gathered shortly after the raid began and they were worried Mastermind would take hostages. We're lucky he just disappeared."

Izuku's head snapped up as the cogs in his brain started turning. *Hostages*, he thought, *now there's an idea.*}

"Once again, this time with feeling, *fuck*!"

{"Did you enjoy dinner with Katsuki's family? You're kinda tired tonight."

Izuku nodded, "Yeah, it was great, as always. It's just...I'm kinda tired. I think I'm just gonna go to bed early."

Inko looked at him with concern, "Don't you want to watch the news?"

Izuku just shook his head. It'd all be about the failed raid, anyway, "Goodnight Mom."

Inko looked like she wanted to protest, but pity won out, "Ok, Izuku, Goodnight."

He shut his door and immediately went to his desk and opened the untraceable laptop he'd gotten from Giran. Hostages. It was such a simple idea, but it would be extremely effective. Because the first rule of hero work was to prioritize the rescue, any time a hostage was in danger, the heroes would have to do whatever was

necessary to keep the hostage safe, rather than catch the villain. But who to take? Izuku sighed, kidnapping civilians and holding them somewhere just wasn't practical. As shitty as his life was outside his villainy, it still existed. He didn't just have an underground bunker somewhere to keep hostages fed and alive for an indeterminate amount of time. If only he could just threaten to kill more heroes if they caught him or something, but then he'd be caught and wouldn't be able to kill them.}

Shigiraki squinted at the screen trying to come up with his own plan involving Masterminds skillset.

{He paused. Mastermind had never *had* to be physically present to kill anyone as long as he had interested buyers, it was one of the reasons it'd taken the police so long to acknowledge his existence. Izuku smiled slowly. What he had in mind would take a lot of preparation, and he wouldn't be able to do it alone, but he was sure it would make an impact. He opened up his Mastermind account and drafted a message to a hacker named La Brava that Giran had recommended. The heroes wouldn't know what hit them.}

"Oh dear, a programmer such as the young lady will be quite the challenge to overcome." Nedzu comments knowing the difficulty cyber crimes had with tracking the girl.

{If there was anything good that had come from the failed Mastermind raid, it was that the guy hadn't shown his face for two weeks. Tsukauchi didn't know if he should be happy the guy wasn't committing crimes or frustrated that they couldn't find him, but the fact remained that Mastermind had gone to ground immediately after the raid and hadn't been heard from since. Nedzu had warned that he might be planning something, but Tsukauchi didn't know what it could be. He decided he'd just count his blessings that the media had finally stopped camping in front of the station trying to get statements. It was bad enough that the vultures had finally gotten ahold of the fact that Kamui Woods wasn't just injured, but had been viciously burned alive. He'd been lucky to survive, but there'd be a lengthy recovery process before he'd be able to return to hero work.}

"Oh, Thank god, you're still alive." Mt. Lady sobbed, hugging Kamui.

{Tsukauchi's thoughts were interrupted by his phone ringing.

"Hello?"

"Detective, are you watching the news?" Nedzu's voice sounded worried and alarm bells started ringing in Tsukauchi's head. He'd heard the principal sound gleeful, sad, even frustrated, but he'd never heard him sound *worried* before, "Turn to channel 5."}

"I am *fear*." Kaminari shivers.

"Dude, same." Sero agrees.

{Tsukauchi grabbed the remote to the small t.v. by his desk and turned it on to find two terrified-looking news anchors looking into the camera.

"...left on the desk of the main producer of our station this morning with instructions to air it or our entire production team would be killed. We do not know yet what is on this tape, so we urge viewers to stop watching as there is the possibility that it could contain sensitive information or images that could be triggering to some viewers."}

"He hijacked the media!?" Hagakure squeaks.

"I might throw up." Ojirou mumbles.

"It'll be okay...eventually." Sato whispers.

{The screen cut to a dark green background. A black circle with a capital M inside it was superimposed on the green and Tsukauchi found it hard to breathe. He'd seen that symbol before on some of Mastermind's latest plans, it was a sort of signature he'd added in the past few months, probably to discourage copycats. This was bad.}

"That's some good branding." Twice nods impressed *"It's so plain!"*

{The image faded to reveal Mastermind in a dark room, his toxic green eyes looking directly into the camera. His voice was somewhat distorted, but it still sounded young and male.

"Hello! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Mastermind! I'm the strategist behind the recent uptick in hero deaths. You're welcome!" He said cheerfully, "So, some of you may have heard already, but the heroes almost managed to catch me last week," he slowly clapped, "Congratulations, *heroes*, and

I'd say better luck next time, but," he turned deadly serious, "there won't be a next time. You see, this video is just a courtesy to let you know that this is now a hostage situation. If I am caught or killed, the murder plans for all top 50 heroes will be automatically released to interested buyers."}

"Deku," Uraraka gulped "I had no idea you could be so menacing."

"Me either." He whispered with a touch of fear.

{Tsukauchi couldn't look away. Taking the top 50 heroes hostage? Mastermind couldn't be serious!}

"This can't be happening." Tsukauchi says breathlessly.

{"Now, I know what you're thinking, *'But Mastermind? Heroes can defend themselves! You can't take them hostage!'* " His eyes took on a wicked glint, "But, you see, that's where you're wrong. I've proved over a dozen times that heroes aren't as invincible as you all want to believe. Just ask Mt. Lady. Stretch? Or maybe Glimmer?"}

"The fuckers gloating now." Bakugo growls lowly clenching his fist in frustration.

{"Detective? Detective?" Tsukauchi raised his phone to his ear again from where it had fallen on his desk, "I'm here."

"Please tell me this is a bluff." Nedzu pleaded, "Tell me that he doesn't actually plan on doing this."

Tsukauchi swallowed, "My quirk hasn't registered any lies…" Nedzu swore, another first for the principal.}

"He can't truly think he can do this." Endeavor scowls.

"It looks like he can." Mirko barks back.

"May I remind you *we* are in the top 50," Hawks starts trying to stay at least a little calm "hell we're in the top 10."

{"Now," Mastermind continued, "in case you think that this is a bluff, I'm going to give you proof. I'll wait until this video airs, then I'll release the murder plans for Pro Hero Wash. He's in the top 10, a pretty competent hero by all accounts. So go ahead, try to protect him. I'm frankly excited to see you try." Mastermind

was smiling now if his eyes were any indication, “And just remember, once he’s dead, that if you catch me or kill me, you’ll have a *lot* more dead heroes on your hands. You might be able to save some of the top 50, but there’s no way you’ll be able to save them all.” Mastermind waved to the camera, “Good luck!”}

"This is so much fun." Dabi says around a mouthful of popcorn, occasionally tossing pieces at the hero students.

{The screen cut back to the news anchors, who began to discuss the footage, but Tsukauchi could hardly hear them. Mastermind had just gone from a dangerous up-and-coming to an S-ranked villain instantly. And they couldn’t do a thing about it.}

The villains clap for Mastermind's new rank and achievement, while the rest of the theater watches with bated breath.

{“I’m sorry, Wash, it’ll just be for a few days until we can determine Mastermind’s threat level.”

“It’s ok, detective,” Wash held up his hands placatingly, “I understand the need for extra security. Mastermind had Japan on edge even before he announced his plan to take pro-heroes hostage. I just hope everything works out and we can catch him soon.”

Tsukauchi sighed and shook his head, “You and me both.”

They were currently in a safe house, which meant that Wash had to take a few days off hero duty, but it wasn’t the end of the world. At least this would prove to Japan that the police and heroes were able to protect the top 50 and render Mastermind’s “hostage situation” harmless. It would all be worth it in the end.}

"I have a terrible feeling about this." Aizawa says with strained calm.

"I think we all do." Mic agrees.

{“Start the stream!” A voice called out and Wash and Tsukauchi immediately went on high alert. There wasn’t supposed to be anyone but them here right now. The other officers weren’t scheduled to arrive for another 20 minutes. Tsukauchi took out his gun and looked at Wash, who nodded his head and took a place behind the detective. They flinched as an explosion sounded and the door to the safe house flew open. Four thugs ran in with

gas masks, the one at the back holding a phone out in front of him. Tsukauchi fired as Wash shot a stream of water at the villains. All of a sudden, Wash spasmed and fell to the floor.}

"An electricity quirk." Kaminari whispers in horror and just a touch of guilt. His friends lean in closer giving him comforting squeezes; even Bakugo sat just a little closer than before.

{“Wash!” Tsukauchi cried out.

“Hah, water’s an awesome conductor, isn’t it, *hero*?” the lead thug said. Tsukauchi aimed for him, only to realize that one of their quirks created a bulletproof shield and all his bullets were falling ineffectually on the floor. He grabbed a lamp, the nearest thing he could use as a weapon, and stood in front of the unconscious hero, preparing to make a last stand. One of the thugs rushed him and Tsukauchi knocked him aside easily, but the next grabbed his lamp and forced him to grapple. All of a sudden, his opponent let go of him and stood back, but rather than catch his breath, Tsukauchi stiffened as he felt electricity run through him and he fell paralyzed against the couch.}

"He's still awake." Koda comments in fear for the man.

{“Make sure you get this on camera! Mastermind wants the world to know what he’s capable of. It’s the least I can do to rid the world of this *scum* that arrested my brother.”

The thug with the camera nodded and Tsukauchi watched helplessly as the lead villain took out a gun of his own and shot Wash twice in the chest. He paused a moment, then put another bullet in the hero’s head.}

The fans and co-workers of Wash begin crying for the lost hero, mourning him even from another world.

{“You can never be too sure,” He laughed, “Roaches like that are tough to kill. Come on boys, let's go.”

Backup arrived as Tsukauchi was finally able to start moving again. He watched as paramedics rushed to Wash first, only to shake their heads and come to help him instead.

“Are you ok, sir, can you move?”

Tsukauchi nodded and flinched. The paramedics continued asking

him questions and he answered numbly. Nedzu arrived as they were leading him to the ambulance with a shock blanket around his shoulders.

He must have looked pretty bad because the principal immediately looked at him with concern, “Are you ok, detective?”

Tsukauchi shrugged, “My entire body hurts like hell, but the paramedics say I’ll be ok.”}

"You're crying, sweetie." Midnight sniffles herself.

{Nedzu got a strange look in his eye, “No, I mean emotionally.”

Tsukauchi rubbed his eyes in frustration and was surprised when his hand came away wet. When had he started crying?

“The leader had an electric-type quirk. When Wash got hit with it, I thought he was just unconscious, but it just paralyzed whoever got hit with it. I was awake the whole time. I had to...oh god, I had to just watch while they killed him and I couldn’t do anything about it.” He looked at Nedzu helplessly, “What are we gonna do?”

Nedzu just looked to where the media were already starting to gather, despite the fact that Wash’s death had been live streamed, “I don’t know,” he whispered, “I really don’t know.”}

As the screen fades tissues and comforting words are exchanged, reminding each other that their own Wash was still alive and well within their home world. All while the villains start placing bets on who the next 'on screen' death will be. Shigiraki wants it to be All Might, Dabi is cheering for Endeavor, and Toga just wants it to be bloody. Quiet returns to the crowd as the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: The Crab

V:TGG Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

The Crab

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Don't Die

{How did Shouta get himself into these situations?

There had been a trigger-enhanced next-level villain attack earlier that day, so he was doing the rounds, shaking down any trigger dealers he knew to try to get some leads while the police tried to figure out the poor guy's identity. The first few had been just what he expected, but this last one had shot up as soon as Aizawa started asking questions and now he was trying to figure out how to lead this guy away from populated areas. And he was a mutant type, so there was that.}

"Yikes this guy pulled out all the stops." Mina comments.

"And he just made himself look even worse, the fucking dumbass." Bakugo adds.

{The dealer had a crab-type heteromorphic quirk, which hadn't been a big deal when his skin was just a bit more durable and there was an extra pair of arms, but now his skin had hardened into an armored shell and his hands and turned into razor sharp claws and Shouta couldn't erase it. So far, he'd just been dodging all of the villain's attacks and waiting for the trigger to wear off. This batch must have been more potent than most, however, because they'd been doing this dance for ten minutes now and the guy wasn't even out of breath.}

"I don't like how tired he's looking." Mic warns.

"I know, I know, I wish we could *do* something." Midnight agrees.

{Sneak attacks were really much more effective, not that he couldn't do drawn-out battles, but he didn't prefer them for various reasons. One of those reasons was that the longer he fought, the more likely it was for him to blink and miss something important, such as one of the claws reaching out and tangling itself in his capture weapon. Within seconds, the crab villain had managed to spin his claws in such a way that Shouta was tangled in his own weapon and his hands were pinned to his side. Dang, it. If he made it out of this alive, Tsukauchi would never let him live this down.}

"Just make it out of there first." Tsukauchi remarks tensely.

{The villain was grinning down at him as he gradually tightened the weapon until Shouta couldn't breathe, then tightened it some more. Suddenly, Shouta felt something whiz by the top of his head and hit the villain right between his eyes, making him stagger back and loosen his hold on the capture weapon. Shouta gasped for air and tried to yank his capture weapon back, but the villain had already recovered. Swearing, he reached for his knife to cut the weapon right as his opponent moved to tighten the noose again.}

"I know this is really tense and all that, but seeing Eraserhead use his escape method is so cool." Izuku enthuses.

"It's okay Deku, we know how much of a fanboy you are." Uraraka teases.

{Suddenly, the villain cried out in pain and clutched his eyes. Shouta didn't waste any time cutting the weapon free of the villain's claws and stepping back to catch his breath. Now that he wasn't about to die, he glanced to the side to see who had helped him, only to see Viridian trembling beside him with his slingshot still at the ready. The kid's expression was frozen halfway between determined and terrified, a fact that Shouta probably would have laughed at in any other situation.}

Despite the situation however many snorts can be heard all around.

{"Get out of here, kid!" Shouta yelled. "This guy's on trigger, he's out of your league."

Izuku knew that he should listen to Eraserhead. This guy was...a lot bigger than most of the small fry he'd managed to take down alone. Even Eraser was having trouble with him! But that was exactly why Izuku knew that he couldn't leave! If he left, even if it was to go get another hero, then there was a chance that Eraserhead would be dead by the time he came back and he wouldn't be able to live with himself if that happened. Besides, it's not like he was taking a huge risk fighting this guy. Eraserhead would be able to save so many more people than Izuku could if he survived this fight, and he was a hero that would still be able to fight his way out even if the villain killed Izuku.}

"And I forgot Viridian was suicidal again." Kaminari groaned.

"To be fair it's been a bit since he last thought about death." Sero comforts morbidly.

{That was why Izuku didn't hesitate to run forward, ignoring Eraser's yells behind him as he switched his slingshot out for his pipes. If only one of them could survive this fight, Izuku had to make sure it was Eraserhead and not a useless Deku like him. Izuku just hoped he could distract the villain long enough for Eraserhead to beat him.}

"No Problem Child." Aizawa sighs solemnly.

{He'd been aiming for the villain's eyes to get him to let go of his victim earlier, but Izuku's aim wasn't very good yet and it had taken a few tries, which was why he'd decided to switch to close range. Besides, he didn't think his marbles would do much good against the villain's shell anyway. He didn't know if his pipes would do much better, but at least they were easier to aim.

He tried to review what he knew about crabs as he got closer, but he couldn't think of any obvious weaknesses, except for maybe the joints. Even if the guy's skin was hardened into a shell, there had to be breaks in it so he could move around and Izuku had had enough action figures break at the joints that he knew how fragile they were.}

"The fanboy speaks." Hagakure giggles quietly.

{He brought both pipes down on the bend of one of the villain's arms, hoping he was right and had to duck quickly as one of the claws was aimed toward his head. He rolled just like Eraser had

taught him to and got to his feet to see the arm he'd targeted hanging a little more limply.}

"Excellent battle tactics." Nedzu compliments.

{"Eraser! Aim for the joints!"

He heard Eraser yelling something at him again, but focused on running forward again and hitting one of the villain's knees. If he could just decrease his mobility…

He rolled away as the villain stumbled and he looked to see that Eraser had wrapped his capture weapon around one of the villain's arms and used that as leverage to slingshot himself and kick at the villain's hips. So cool! The only problem was that even though the villain had collapsed onto the ground from the combined force of both their attacks, he still had a solid hold on Eraser's capture weapon and was trying to tangle it around Eraser like he had been when Izuku arrived.}

"The little shit isn't so bad in a fight considering he's basically taught himself." Dabi comments.

{Izuku dodged another hit from the villain's flailing arms and switched to his knife. He was still nervous to really use it, but it's not like he was actually using it on the villain, right? He just needed to cut the capture weapon so that Eraser could get free. He unfolded the blade and ran forward, trying to slash the cloth as close to the villain's arm as he could. It took a few passes since the cloth must be mixed with some kind of metal, but Eraserhead had gotten out his own knife and together they managed to get him free. Izuku hesitated only a moment before tossing his pipes to Eraser, who caught them with a confused look on his face.

"Your capture weapon isn't a good match for this villain. It's only gonna keep getting tangled." Izuku's eyes widened as he realized he'd just told a hero what to do. "Not that you have to use my pipes! I mean, you obviously know a lot better than I do and you've been doing this a lot longer and…"

"Viridian, look out!"

Izuku only caught a glimpse of the freaked-out look on Eraser's face before the blunt part of one of the villain's claws hit him in the stomach and threw him hard against one of the walls. Good thing he'd already given Eraser his pipes.}

"No!" "Please be okay!" "Viridian!" "Get up!" "Live!"

{Shouta froze as he watched Viridian, a literal child, get batted against the wall and pass out. Or hopefully, pass out. The kid was slumped over and had gone limp, but Shouta didn't know what he'd do if the kid was…

He turned back to the villain with rage in his eyes, clutching the pipes Viridian had given him like a lifeline as he practically growled, "Big mistake."}

Shivers roll through the audience; as gruff as the man is it is a rare sight for him to be truly *enraged*.

{He ducked and dodged every attack the villain threw at him and used the pipes to bludgeon the joints. He wasn't used to fighting with them, but he had to admit that they were much more effective than his capture weapon against this particular villain. Within minutes, the villain collapsed in a pile on the floor and started to shrink down as the trigger finally wore off. Shouta texted Tsukauchi to come pick the villain up and ran to help Viridian.

"Kid, can you hear me?"

Viridian groaned, "Eraserhead? Are you ok? Did you win?"

Shouta looked at the kid in shock, "Am I ok? Am *I* ok? You just got thrown against a wall, problem child! You're lucky you didn't die!"

Viridian shrugged as he got to his feet. *Shrugged!*}

"More context clues, let's hope the other me finally puts it together soon." Eraser says slightly frustrated.

"Then he can help the little listener." Mic practically cheers.

{"Well, you beat the villain, didn't you? So it was worth it."

Shouta opened and closed his mouth a few times as he tried to figure out how to respond to that, "No! Kid, that was stupid and reckless! Don't do that again."

"...ok."

He didn't like the fact that he could tell Viridian was lying. If the

kid kept putting himself in dangerous situations like this, which it sounded like he was going to, then he was going to get himself killed. Shouta needed to make sure that didn't happen. And he needed to make sure the kid was actually okay after that blow.}

"I hate seeing Midoriya in such a dismal mindset." Momo comments.

"And it's frustrating knowing what sensei doesn't and not being able to tell him." Jiro agrees.

{"Come on, kid. I'm taking you to the hospital."

The kid shook his head frantically, only to stop with a wince, which meant that the kid most likely had a headache and probably a concussion as well. All the more reason to get him medical attention. He grabbed onto the Viridian's arm, careful not to hold on too tight in case the kid was bruised there.

"No offense, problem child, but I'm not giving you a choice. You need a doctor."

Viridian frowned, but stopped fighting and let Shouta start leading him down the street toward the nearest hospital. Shouta sighed with relief and tore his eyes away from the kid so he could see where they were going, which was why he missed the way the kid's arm wound up for a punch.}

"Note to self never take your eye off someone you're escorting." Sato comments with agreement and huffs of laughter from those who heard him.

{The hit was sloppy, but Viridian actually managed to punch him right on the nose with a surprising amount of strength. Instinctively, his hands went to his face as his eyes watered and by the time he'd recovered enough to see again, Viridian had already disappeared.

"Damn problem child." Shouta muttered as he made his way back to the downed villain. "What am I gonna do?"}

"I sucker-punched Eraserhead." Izuku states in shock.

"Deku..." Uraraka tries to calm him.

"I *sucker-punched* our *teacher*." Izuku groans with pats on the back from his friends.

"If it makes you feel better we'll probably be watching me and you have our first day at UA," Mei comforts "won't that be fun."

"Yeah, yeah, it will." Izuku concedes.

"Everybody shut up and sit down, me and Cheat Code gotta make some babies!"

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: A whole ass room

CC:SS Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

A whole ass room

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Classroom

{Izuku tugged at the knot of his tie again, trying to get it to vaguely resemble a triangle at the very least, and tried to ignore Katsuki, who was glaring at him from the other end of the train. It was just his luck that they'd left at the same time and ended up in the same car, but from the map of UA he'd been sent alongside his acceptance letter, the support classes were in an entirely different part of the building than the hero courses, so they would have to head in separate directions almost as soon as they arrived and then he could meet up with Mei. Easy as pie.}

"Can we go without the bully/victim confrontation happening every chapter?" Ashido whines.

"Depends on how much of an idiot that version of me decides to be." Bakugo growls annoyed at his other's actions.

{Even though he'd already been there for the entrance exams, walking into UA as a student was an overwhelming experience. He hadn't even realized he'd stopped just outside the door until Katsuki roughly shoulder-checked him, knocking him over the threshold.

"Stay out of my way, Deku."}

"That's kinda tame for him." Izuku comments weirdly proud.

{Izuku instinctively tensed, wondering if Katsuki had finally had enough of his new attitude and he was actually going to die before classes even started, but Katsuki just walked away, not even sparing Izuku a backward glance as he headed toward the hero course. He supposed that even Katsuki wasn't overconfident enough to attack him in the halls of the best hero school in Japan, where a pro hero could walk around the corner at any minute. Still, Izuku would have to start leaving earlier if he wanted to avoid being jumped outside the gates.}

"And that's another thing Kacchan never did to me." Izuku huffs frustrated with how much worse his childhood friend had gotten in these other worlds.

{As soon as Katsuki was finally out of sight, Izuku let out a breath of relief and walked in the opposite direction, relying on the map he'd memorized to find his way to class 1-F. The school was a little like a maze and Izuku wondered how much of that was intentional. It must make it more difficult for villains to find their way around if they ever got inside, or maybe Nedzu had just remodeled the school this way to get some petty revenge on humans and let them know what running a maze felt like. Honestly, it was probably both. Eventually, Izuku found the correct hallway and was met with an armful of Mei as soon as he turned the corner.}

Nedzu said under his breath "Both indeed."

{"Why are our teachers so cruel, Izu-Kun?!" Mei sobbed into his shoulder.

Izuku's mind started racing. Were the teachers here going to be like the ones at Aldera? He'd just assumed that they'd be kinder because they were pro-heroes and were supposed to save people, but what if they were just as bad? No, they'd be worse because they had more training.}

"The little listener has been through some kinda hell to assume that." Mic comments.

"School-related trauma is a challenge to assist with considering we hold the same positions as those responsible." Hound Dog informs.

"Good thing we're always up for a challenge." Powerloader grins.

{Before his brain could even fully process those thoughts, Mei

started speaking again, “They locked the lab and won’t let us in until the teacher gets here! Why, Izu-kun! I need to make my babies!”

Izuku practically melted in relief. Their teachers weren’t *actually* cruel. It was just Mei being Mei. Not that her outrage didn’t make sense! It just wasn’t as objectively bad as what Izuku had been thinking! The lab being locked might be an inconvenience, but it wouldn’t feel like the end of the world to anyone else besides her.}

"Mei-chan!" Izuku whines "You can't say things like that!"

"Sorry Izu-Kun, I couldn't help it." Mei says grinning like the mad woman she is.

{“Mei, it’s the first day.” Izuku reminded her gently, “And don’t pretend that you wouldn’t just blow something up if you were allowed in right now.”

“It’s part of my *process*, Izu-kun!” Mei insisted. “You can’t have success without a little failure!”

“Maybe so,” Izuku said patiently, “but it still makes sense for them to want to supervise us until they know we can handle ourselves.”}

"He's such a mom friend." Himiko giggles.

Shigiraki stiffens "Is Mastermind going to mother hen me?"

"Don't bitch about someone actually caring, we could use some of that." Dabi gripes.

{She pouted at that but relented and pulled him by the wrist to sit on the hallway floor next to a few other kids who must be their future classmates. They’d been staring, something Izuku was sure he’d get more used to the longer he hung out with Mei, but they quickly looked away when they noticed him glancing their way.

Mei pulled out a sketchbook and started sketching out diagrams for her latest invention while Izuku immediately took advantage of the time to analyze their classmates’ quirks, or at least those that were obvious from a glance, which surprisingly wasn’t that many. There were only two students with obvious mutations and the rest looked normal, but Izuku supposed that less obvious

mutations, like the crosshairs in Mei's eyes, might not be easy to see unless he actually had a conversation with them and had an opportunity to get up close and personal. Of the two with mutation quirks, one had a mutation similar to Gang Orca but with the head of a great white shark rather than a killer whale, and the other had large pointed ears and a bald head, though Izuku didn't know if the baldness was quirk related or a stylistic choice. Wait a second; he didn't have eyebrows either, which meant that it was most likely due to his quirk.}

"Do you do this every time you meet someone?" Todoroki raises an eyebrow at him.

"My first thought when I caught sight of you was 'He has a dual quirk', I was very confused when you only used your ice that first day." Izuku deadpans.

{"Izu-Kun, you're muttering again." Mei said distractedly.

Izuku jolted and realized that the kid with the pointed ears was blushing and the rest of the class was looking at him nervously.

"Oh…" Izuku smiled awkwardly at the kid, "S-sorry. I'm, um, trying to be more aware of when I'm doing that. But I would be interested if you want to tell me!"}

"So polite." Ochako teases causing Izuku to shush her.

{The kid looked like he really didn't, but also didn't know how to say no, "Um...I just have alopecia. I don't think it's linked to my quirk, but it might be, since a couple other people in my family have it too, and we all have similar quirks..."

He trailed off and as much as Izuku wanted to ask what his quirk was, he didn't want their classmates to think he was creepy. Actually, it was probably too late for that, since the rest of the students in the hallway already seemed to be avoiding him and Mei. Still, the kid probably didn't feel comfortable telling Izuku his quirk, so he shouldn't press the issue. It would most likely come up eventually anyway, since most classes shared their name and quirk on the first day, something that he wasn't looking forward to at all. At least he wouldn't lose any friends when it came out that he was quirkless.}

"That's such a terrible silver lining." Hagakure squeaks.

{“Izu-Kun,” Mei asked suddenly, “did you see that Kamui Wood’s fight yesterday?”

Izuku nodded eagerly, grateful for the distraction “It was against that tortoise villain, right?”

“Yep!” Mei confirmed. “So, what did you think?”

He thought for a moment, “Well, it wasn’t a good matchup, at least not with how the two currently fight. Kamui’s strengths are speed and capture, so Shell-Shock’s natural slowness put him at a huge disadvantage. It could have gone a lot differently though. His shell is hard enough that physical attacks are useless against it, not that that would have helped against Kamui’s lacquered chain prison, but if he had thought to use his shell as a bludgeoning weapon, he probably could have broken out of even that trap fairly easily One of Kamui’s major weaknesses is how soft his wood is since it has to grow so fast.”}

"Those are some good observations." Kamui says stroking his chin in thought.

{“Hmm,” Mei grinned and wrote something down, “what do you think of turtle-shell armor?”

Izuku grimaced and shook his head, “Too heavy. There’s a reason why tortoises are so slow….Turtles, however, can move pretty quickly in water, so the idea might be more practical for a water-combat hero like Selkie.”

“And if there are air chambers to help with buoyancy, the armor won’t sink even if it’s heavy!” Mei brainstormed happily. She scribbled out some of the things she’d already written down and turned to a new page of her sketchbook.}

"Mei-chan?"

"Already sketching Izu-Kun!"

{They spent the rest of their wait discussing various hero fights Izuku had seen that week and discussing how to mimic the strengths or cover their weaknesses of both the heroes and villains. Izuku was vaguely aware of their classmates discretely edging away from them, but he couldn't bring himself to care. Katsuki and their old classmates had already made it wonderfully clear how creepy his notebooks were, but Izuku was at UA to

become the best analyst he could be, so he wasn't about to let some judgmental classmates hold him back. He was honestly just lucky that Mei had sat next to him at the exams. He probably still would have met her, since they were in the same class and everything, but he would have been about a thousand times more nervous.}

"Nothing really compares to the companionship brought on by a true honest friend." Tokoyami rumbles.

"It's like a party every day." Dark Shadow agrees.

{The bell rang right as Powerloader rounded the corner. Mei immediately shoved her sketchbook into Izuku's hands and jumped to her feet, running up to their new homeroom teacher so quickly that she almost ran into him, "Are you gonna open the lab now? Can we get straight to work? When can I start making my babies?"

Powerloader took a step back in shock, but then sighed in resignation, making Izuku giggle softly. He must have gotten a taste of Mei's antics during the invention practical, which must have been a total nightmare because he knew for a fact that Mei had caused at least one explosion during the test. Poor guy.}

"You don't know the half of it." Powerloader says in defeat.

{"Hatsume, please calm down." Powerloader pleaded. "And yes, we'll be going in the room in a few minutes, but I have some things to explain first."

Mei looked like she was about to argue, so Izuku stood up and tugged on her arm, "Come on, just be patient a little longer, ok Mei-chan?"

Mei pouted and plopped down on the floor again, "Ok, but if he takes too long, I'm picking the lock, ok?"

Powerloader already looked done, "It's an electronic lock. You can't get in without a passcode."

"I'll just have Izu-Kun hack it then."

"It'll take longer to hack the keypad than to listen to Powerloader." Izuku turned to their teacher. "I'm sorry about her, she's just been really looking forward to this."

“It’s fine.” Powerloader sighed. “Ok, so for the rest of you, thanks for your patience. You all know me from the entrance exam, but I’ll go ahead and introduce myself again anyway. I’m Powerloader, your homeroom teacher, and I am also the head of the support department here at UA. Yes, this includes all three emphases, though design and analysis each have a teacher that has responsibility for those students specifically.”

“Who are they?” A girl with brown curly hair asked.

“Midnight’s in charge of the design track.” Izuku said. He remembered that much from their brief conversation as they were taking him to Nedzu’s office. “As for analysis, I’m not quite sure, but I’m pretty sure it’s Nedzu himself, right?”

“I feel sorry for whoever’s in the analysis track.” The kid with the shark head shivered. “I’ve heard Nedzu’s a total monster.”}

"Is he really that bad?" Izuku asks confused.

"Ask Kaminari and Ashido and see what happens, kero." Tsu jokes.

"Fair enough."

{Izuku frowned. He hadn’t really talked to Nedzu that much, since he’d been more focused on trying to hack UA, but from their brief interaction, he hadn’t seemed like a monster at all. If anything, he was just looking for some entertainment, since being so intelligent meant he got bored more quickly. He *had* heard that Nedzu could be a little scary, but so far, Izuku didn’t see any reason to be afraid of him.}

"Ah, that explains it." Uraraka says in understanding.

"What? What explains what?" Midoriya asks suddenly confused.

"I believe Uraraka is referring to you, like Principal Nedzu, being an intelligent individual and thus understanding his boredom." Iida elaborates.

"Oh, I thought it was obvious." Izuku comments, embarrassed at being compared to Nedzu.

{“Can everyone just shut up so we can get this over with and get into the lab?” Mei complained loudly.

Powerloader cleared his throat, “Um, yes, of course. I’m sure you remember that we asked each of you what tools and materials you wanted, correct? Well, we’ve included those items in your personalized workstations. When you enter the lab, find the table with the tools you ordered. There’s also a nameplate on each desk to make it easier and prevent confusion. We have to go to the opening ceremony in twenty minutes, but that time is yours to get familiar with the space and set up your station the way you like it. You’ve all already passed the lab safety test, but please be aware that if you are caught engaging in unsafe lab procedures, you *will* receive detention and a ban from the lab until you have demonstrated that you are willing to follow the rules."}

"Party pooper." Mei grumbled causing snickering or wariness to surround her.

{Powerloader looked at Mei as he said that last part and Izuku had to hold back a laugh. Mei would never do anything to jeopardize her lab access. She *would*, however, bend the rules as far as they could go and use every loophole to her advantage and Izuku would probably get dragged into helping her. So maybe the entrance exam hadn’t been quite long enough for Powerloader to get to know her particular brand of idiosyncrasies after all. Oh well, he’d figure her out eventually.}

"I will figure her out eventually!" Powerloader claims.

"Not likely!" Mei cries back.

{Powerloader entered the access code and Mei rushed past him the second the door was open while Izuku followed with the rest of the class at a more sedate pace. The lab was large, with about ten large workbenches that acted as desks. Support classes tended to be a little smaller than the average class because of the space and supervision needed, but Izuku didn’t mind having fewer classmates. It just meant that there were fewer people to make fun of him.}

"Who would have thought 1A's resident sunshine was such a pessimist?" Monoma snarks.

{Mei was already elbows deep in her new tools, practically drooling as she pulled them from their boxes and started testing them out. Izuku simply chuckled and left her to it, since she probably wouldn’t hear him if he started talking to her now

anyway, and started looking for his own workspace. He had the feeling that most of his classmates were finding their tables primarily based on the unique tools they'd requested, but Izuku hadn't really known what to ask for. He was an analyst, not an inventor, so all he really *needed* was a computer with internet access and maybe some notebooks. He'd said as much in the request forms, but made sure to tell them that he already had his laptop and that he was more than used to buying his own notebooks, so they didn't have to go out of their way for him.}

The teachers collectively snort knowing their boss's penchant for going over the top.

{Which meant that Izuku was looking for a mostly empty workbench. He walked around the room, watching as some of his classmates started finding their assigned areas, but every single one of the tables he could see was cluttered with tools and boxes. Maybe they'd just had too much stuff and had put some boxes on his table to keep them off the floor? That'd make sense. It wasn't as though Izuku needed a lot of space to do his thing anyway since he was used to doing it running down the street while chasing hero fights. He was just glad to be useful, even if that usefulness was just lending some much-needed table space.

So that meant that he'd have to rely on the little nameplates. He didn't want to bother anyone, so he went over to Mei's table so he knew what the nameplates looked like since she wouldn't notice him and if she did, she wouldn't care. They were actually really nice, not that he expected anything less than the best from UA, but they each looked like engraved brass and had been screwed onto the table so they wouldn't fall off even if there were a strong breeze or, in Mei's case, an explosion. That was probably smart.}

"You have no idea." Mei comments, laughing maniacally.

{Izuku walked around the room again, checking the nameplates on each of the tables that didn't have someone there already, only to come up empty. Powerloader *had* said Izuku was in class 1-F, hadn't he? Had they changed his assignment at the last minute? What if they'd sent him an email and Izuku had missed it? What if they had just decided that he didn't need a desk? What if they'd decided to not let him into UA after all?}

"Jesus kid calm the fuck down." Dabi snarks a mix of annoyance and concern in his voice.

{Izuku shook his head and forced himself to take a deep breath. If they had decided to rescind his acceptance, the student ID they'd sent him wouldn't have let him pass the gate this morning. So he was still a student of UA and didn't have to worry about that, but he still had to find his desk. Maybe he should ask Powerloader? But he didn't want to bother him and what if he realized how stupid Izuku was when he realized he couldn't even find his own desk and decided to expel him on the spot? It wouldn't hurt to do one more walk around the room and look at all the nametags again, right? Maybe he'd just missed something, maybe….

"Who the fuck is Izuku Midoriya and why does he need a whole-ass room?"}

"I'm sorry, what?" "Room?" "Did I hear that right?"

{Izuku whirled around to look at the girl with brown curls, which now that he was thinking about it looked a lot like wire, could that be her quirk? No, he couldn't get distracted by quirks right now! Anyway, she was the one who'd called out and gotten his attention. Actually, she'd gotten the attention of the whole class. Even Mei was looking over at her...wait, did she say *room?*}

"That's what we said." Kaminari grins at the screen.

{Izuku practically ran over to where the girl was gesturing to a door that was marked with the same nameplate as each of the desks, and sure enough, that was his name engraved on the metal. Izuku pushed past the girl, realizing too late that that was probably really rude, and rushed into the room, *his* room. The lights were off, but the room was illuminated by at least five monitors that Izuku could see, one of which was a giant flatscreen that was mounted to the wall above the desk. There was a giant bookshelf against one of the sidewalls that was filled with notebooks and Izuku's fingers twitched as he thought about filling all of them.}

Izuku stared at the screen in awe "Is that really *mine*?" his friends chuckle and inform him that yes that room is in fact his.

{He heard a whistle behind him, but couldn't pull his eyes away from the setup as Mei came up to stand beside him, "Wow, Hacker-Kun, UA doesn't do anything halfway, do they?"

"Please tell me I'm not dreaming, Mei-chan." Izuku said breathlessly. "I didn't even request any of this!"

“Yeah, sorry about that, Nedzu went a little overboard.”}

"Understatement much." Jiro snarked.

{Izuku turned to see Powerloader leaning against the doorframe as the other students either crowded around him or looked in the windows that Izuku hadn’t noticed that looked into the rest of the lab. Powerloader was smiling slightly, though it could have been in embarrassment or amusement at Izuku’s reaction.

“Everyone, this is Izuku Midoriya, the only first-year in the analysis track and Nedzu’s personal student.” Powerloader introduced. “It’s been so long since Nedzu has had an analysis student that he got a little too excited and insisted on designing your workspace himself. This used to be a testing room, there are a few others on either side of you, but this way you won’t be distracted by the noise of the lab or worried about lab accidents damaging your computers.”

Powerloader shot a pointed look at Mei, who ignored him in favor of grabbing Izuku’s arm and jumping up and down, “This is awesome, Izu-Kun! Just imagine everything you’ll be able to do with all these hacking babies!”}

"This is so cool!" "Congratulations!" "Have fun!" "Enjoy it!"

{Izuku nodded, then remembered his manners and bowed to Powerloader, “Thank you! I’ll do my best to put it to good use!”

Powerloader nodded and smiled as he left. Mei gave his arm a reassuring squeeze before running back out of the room to her own workspace and Izuku noted with relief that he had a clear view of her desk from his windows. He didn’t know why that was so reassuring, but it was probably because she was his only friend and he didn’t want to feel alone again. The other students each looked at Izuku curiously before they too turned back to their own workspaces and he hoped that they wouldn’t find him quite as creepy as they had before, now that they had a wall separating them and knew that he was *supposed* to be analyzing everything.

Izuku reverently sat down at the desk and started to familiarize himself with the computers. He had a feeling this was going to be a good year.}

The theater claps as the thought of at least one of these Midoriyas being comfortable where he is is such a relief. Chattering on about

what projects Cheat Code will take on and how certain events unfold with his absence from the hero course. Once the next clip starts loading, everyone sits turning their attention to the screen.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: An old *friend*

D?ITHSP... Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

An old *friend*

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Kacchan

{Katsuki Bakugo massaged out his wrists as he walked home from the UA entrance exam. He'd been pleasantly surprised that Deku hadn't shown up, but that didn't explain the changes he'd been seeing in the nerd the past few months. At first, it was small, just Deku smiling more and always looking at his phone as if the nerd had anyone to text. Annoying, but not a big deal at the end of the day. But then, about two or three months ago, Katsuki had stopped seeing the nerd outside of class at all. It wasn't like they hung out socially or anything, but Katsuki could usually find Deku during lunch or after school and give him a beat down to make sure he still knew his place and wasn't still trying to be a hero.}

"Wha... Why? I never..." Bakugo huffs in frustration "It never occurred to me to *hunt him down* after school." he growls.

{But lately, it was as if Deku had been disappearing into thin air whenever he didn't have to be in class. Once, Katsuki and his lackeys had followed him into an alleyway that he was *certain* didn't have any other exit, but the nerd was nowhere to be seen. The only sound or movement at all was some cat or something clamoring over the rooftops. And then school let out a month ago and he hadn't seen Deku since. It was really starting to piss him off.}

"It sounds like *that* Young Bakugo was using Young Midoriya has some sort of stress relief." All Might says in disgust.

{So when he saw a telltale sign of green hair turning the corner in front of him, Katsuki didn't hesitate to follow. Deku was listening to something on his phone and muttering to himself like the creep he was, so he didn't notice Katsuki gradually getting closer until he was grabbed by the collar and roughly pulled into an alley.}

"Talk about some common thug." Dabi scoffs.

{"Deku!" He growled and shoved the nerd against the wall.

"K-Kacchan!" Deku squeaked out, "I-it's been a w-while."

Katsuki scoffed, "You've been avoiding me, nerd. You think you're better than me?"

He smiled slightly as Deku's eyes widened in fear, "N-no, Kacchan, that's not it at all! I've just b-been really b-busy and…"

"Busy? As if a nobody like you has places to be." He slammed Deku against the wall again, wincing a little when he heard the nerd's head hit the brick, "Admit it! You think you're too good to be around me!"}

"That's going to be a concussion." Recovery Girl rightfully harps.

{"K-Kacchan…" Deku slurred, but Katsuki wasn't listening. He threw a right hook at Deku's face, eyes widening as the nerd *grabbed his arm* and pivoted as if he was trying to throw Katsuki over his shoulder. Something went wrong at the last minute though, because Deku swayed a bit, then stumbled, allowing Katsuki to yank his arm free.}

"He's injured." Momo shows concern.

"Shame that Bakugo's too much of an ass to see it." Jiro growls.

"Take heart that our own has grown past such vulgar acts." Tokoyami comforts in his own way.

{Katsuki saw red. *That damn nerd!* Was he really trying to fight back? After all the time Katsuki had spent teaching him his place? Who did he think he was?}

"A HUMAN FUCKING BEING WITH A RIGHT TO DEFEND HIMSELF!"

Bakugo screeched at his idiotic alternative, no one has the heart to disagree or even attempt to calm him.

{He grabbed Deku's shoulder with his left hand and set off a small explosion, causing him to cry out, but Katsuki wasn't done. He kept his hand on Deku's shoulder to keep him in place as he kneed him in the gut, then used his right to hit Deku in the jaw, which knocked him to the ground.}

"Stop it!" "So unheroic!" Fucking thug!"

{"P-please, K-Kacchan, stop! I-it hurts! W-we're friends, please, stop!"

Katsuki snorted, "Friends? With a useless loser like you?" He kicked him in the gut and then let loose a few quirked punches that Deku tried to block with his arms, "Who would be friends with *you*?"}

"Me!" "Us!" "Anyone with a brain!"

{As soon as he deemed that Deku had learned his lesson, Katsuki stood up straight and looked down at the cowering nerd. Pathetic.

"I'm glad you didn't show your worthless face at the entrance exam, Deku." He said, "It seems you've finally learned your lesson about trying to be a hero." He gave one last kick, then turned to leave the alley, "Don't make me teach you again."}

"What's he gonna do on their first day at UA!?" Hagakure shrieks.

"Get expelled if he actually tries anything." Aizawa replies before the room can dissolve in panic.

{Izuku dragged himself to the training gym he was meeting his friends at that afternoon, trying to ignore the nausea and the way his vision seemed to blur at the edges. They had all agreed to get together to see how he was coming along with his training, especially now that he was starting to add weapons. He wanted nothing more than to go home and sleep for a million years, but his discussion with Katsuki had already made him late. He couldn't disappoint his friends by not showing up at all.}

"Discussion!?" "Get medical attention!" "They won't that you're late!"

{“Hey, Deku!” Joke cried out cheerfully when she heard the door open, “What took you so long?”

Deku tried to smile despite the pain in his cheek, but that soon turned into a frown when he saw the horrified looks on his friends’ faces. Izuku knew he should know why they were so horrified, but his brain was too foggy to come up with anything.}

"That's *really* bad isn't it?" Uraraka worries.

"Head injuries can go downhill so fast, kero." Tsu adds sadly.

"They will get him help." Iida comforts.

{“...eku. Deku, can you hear me?” Eraserhead was kneeling in front of him and Izuku hissed as he touched the burn on his shoulder. Eraser yanked his hand away but grabbed his other shoulder as Izuku started to sway. He was grateful for the support since he felt like he was going to fall over any second.}

"That burn has got to be real bad." Kaminari says concerned.

"At least he's with sensei now." Ashido sighs.

"Yeah, he'll be okay." Sero comforts. Kiri and Bakugo remain silent.

{“Hi, Eraser…” He tried to say, but it ended up coming out slurred and Izuku frowned in confusion. Why weren’t words working the way they were supposed to? He didn’t normally stutter around his friends.

“Joke, hold him, make sure he stays awake, I’m calling Recovery Girl.”

Izuku brightened, “Recovery Girl is such a great hero,” he slurred, “But I’m not that injured. I’ve had worse…”}

"That's bad, that's very very bad!" Ms. Joke growls in worry.

{Joke looked afraid, “Kiddo...just, ramble for me. What do you like about Recovery Girl’s quirk?”

Izuku nodded but stopped when it felt like his head was about to split in two. He wanted to tell Joke about how the healing energy coming from the person’s own stamina allowed the heroine to heal for hours with hardly any breaks, but for some reason, his tongue felt really heavy. He was really tired.

“...iddo, you’ve ...tta...ay aw..ke….eku!”}

"Don't fall asleep!" "Stay awake!" "Keep talking!"

{For all that Shouta tried to deny it when the others implied he saw Deku as a son, he didn’t think he’d ever been more terrified than when the kid had stumbled in with a massive bruise on his cheek and dirty tear tracks running down his face. The way he’d hissed in pain when Shouta tried to steady him broke his heart and drew his attention to his singed t-shirt and the shiny burns running up and down his arms.}

"You've always been such a dad." Midnight tries to lighten the mood.

"Not now!" He snaps back.

{It didn’t take him long to realize that Deku had a pretty bad concussion and needed medical treatment immediately. How had he even managed to walk here? The kid had to have a freakish pain tolerance, which didn't paint a pretty picture.}

"The kid's a little badass that's for sure." Twice compliments "**So pathetic!**"

{He called Ms. Joke over to steady Deku and keep him awake while he called Recovery Girl. He was trying to explain the situation when he heard Joke’s panicked voice and he turned around just in time to watch Deku pass out in Joke’s arms.

“That’s it, we’re taking him to UA, *now*!”}

"He really said *'fuck it'* dad mode activated." Hagakure giggled nervously.

{Sir Nighteye nodded, “You steady him and make sure we won’t be worsening any injuries, I’ll grab my car.”

“Hang in there, Deku. Please!” Shouta whispered, “Please. We’re gonna get you help.”}

"Eraserhead is so cool." Shigiraki comments airily.

"Yeah I'll give you that." Dabi concedes with a huff.

{Izuku woke up blinking under harsh fluorescent lights. When he

realized he didn't know where he was, he bolted upright, only to fall back on the bed when he was hit by a wave of nausea.}

"Okay," Yaomomo breathes "he's okay." Relief was palpable throughout the crowd.

{"Don't try to sit up too fast, dearie." An old woman's voice said, "You had a bad concussion. I managed to heal most of it, but you still shouldn't move too quickly."

Izuku obeyed the voice and moved more slowly. He felt the bed he was on raising up to help him and figured the owner of the voice must be controlling it.

He turned to look at her, "Recovery Girl!?" She chuckled and nodded, gesturing for Izuku to look around the rest of the room, "Eraser? Joke? Brave? Nighteye? What are you all doing here?" He paused for a moment, "What am *I* doing here? And where is *here* anyway?"}

"You'll get used to it." Izuku comments offhandedly.

"I should hope not!" Iida exclaims horrified. The rest of the squad is quick to agree.

{"You're at UA," Eraser said, "We brought you here because you had a concussion, multiple burns, as well as bruising on your face and stomach. You're honestly lucky you didn't have any internal bleeding."

Izuku nodded along as he remembered the beating Kacchan had given him. That sounded about right. He looked at his friends' faces and was hit by a wave of guilt as he realized he'd made them all worry. He shrank in on himself, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bother you, and it was probably really inconvenient and…" he looked up to find his four closest friends staring at him with so much concern he wanted to throw up and he started to hyperventilate.}

"Wow, uh, we are gonna have a challenge helping with that anxiety of yours, huh, Izu-Kun." Mei winces.

{"Slow down, kid." Mr. Brave was suddenly kneeling at his side, "Breath with me. In, out. Ok?"

After Izuku had managed to calm his breathing, he kept his eyes

glued to the covers in embarrassment. He should have just gone home and hidden his injuries before meeting his friends so they wouldn't have to worry about them. Why didn't he do that? How could he have forgotten to do something so basic?}

"Now children," Recovery Girl stood drawing the attention of all "I need you to understand that I cannot do my job if you hide injuries; and if you're caught doing so I *will* bar you from practical lessons. **Understood?**"

"Yes, ma'am!" The students chorus.

{"I would've been fine, guys. Maybe these injuries seem a *little* bad, but I've always managed pretty well in the past. You didn't need to take me to a doctor."

Recovery Girl rapped him lightly on the head with her cane, "Don't go saying things like that, dearie. Your injuries were severe and in other circumstances could have been life-threatening. Your friends did the right thing by bringing you here."

"Deku," Eraser spoke softly as if expecting Izuku to run away if he spoke too loud, "Who did this to you?"

Izuku stared down at his hands, "It's not his fault."}

"YES, THE *FUCK* IT IS!" Bakugo gripes.

{"What do you mean, kiddo?" It was strange hearing Ms. Joke so quiet when normally her very presence was loud enough to take over a room. Izuku took a deep breath and hoped his friends wouldn't judge him.

"It was my fault. I, um, I shouldn't have gotten in his way. He was right, I was avoiding him, which I guess means he thought that I was thinking I was better than him, which I'm not, I know that. I'll never be better than him, but I guess that's how I was acting because that's what he thought and so it's my fault because he had to teach me a lesson and he's probably going to be super mad when he finds out that I still want to be a hero and then, oh no! And then he's gonna do it again and it'll still be all my fault."}

"On no, Baby, Green Bean, sweetie, none of that is your fault." Amplifier coos.

{Shouta felt his heart break. This kid. He'd just gotten beaten to a pulp, but instead of blaming the guilty party, he was trying to justify it, searching for any tiny thing he'd done to deserve it. And the worst part was that people don't just start to do that overnight. The self-blame that Deku was exhibiting had to be the result of years of abuse, both emotional and physical. Who would do that to a kid?}

"Another fucking kid apparently." Dabi barks.

{"Deku, who did this?"

He watched as Deku continued playing with his hands rather than looking up. He didn't want to push the kid, but…

"I, um, it was my f-friend. K-Kacchan." Deku said softly, then hurried on, "But like I said, it wasn't his fault! It was mine for thinking I was better than him."

Nighteye raised one eyebrow, "First of all, did you actually think that?"

Deku's eyes widened and he flailed his arms, "No! I would never! But he thinks I did, so I must have done *something* to make him think that, so it's my own fault. I shouldn't have gotten in his way, I should have just…"}

"No, this isn't your fault!" Jiro snaps.

{Nighteye raised a hand to cut him off, "If you didn't even do what he was accusing you of, how could it have been your fault? And even if you had 'thought you were better than him' as you put it, it would still have been his fault for lashing out. Does that make any sense?"

Deku thought for a moment, "Kinda. But he's my friend. He wouldn't hurt me if he didn't have a good reason…"

"Sometimes, people don't have to have good reasons to hurt other people." Brave said hesitantly, "And sometimes, they hurt others because it's what makes sense to them, but that doesn't make it right."

"It also doesn't make it your fault, Deku," Joke said, "If this boy decided to hurt you, it's because he wanted to hurt you, not because of anything you did."}

"Preach!" "Sing it!" "You tell him!"

{“B-but that doesn’t make any sense!” Deku sniffled as he started crying again, “If he hurt me, it must be because I did something bad! We’ve been best friends since we were kids!”

“Deku,” Eraser looked him in the eye, “friends don’t hurt each other.”

The room was silent for a long time as Deku digested that information. When he spoke again, his voice was fragile, “You mean, Kacchan’s not really my friend?”

“*We’re* your friends, Deku.” Joke said, “We care about you and would never try to hurt you or ‘teach you your place’. Friends help each other, like when you help us with your analysis, or when we help you with your training. Friends tease each other and lift each other up, they don’t put each other down or try to crush each other’s dreams.”

“Oh.” Deku said quietly.

“I know it probably hurts to hear this,” Nighteye said, “But Kacchan probably hasn’t been your friend in a long time.”

Deku nodded absently.

“But that’s ok!” Brave said cheerfully, “You’ve got us now!”

Deku gave a weak smile, but Shouta could tell he still didn’t really believe them. Not that he could blame the kid. One positive conversation wasn’t enough to override a lifetime of conditioning. He didn’t know how long it would take before Deku realized what an extraordinary kid he was, but Shouta did know one thing.

If he ever met this ‘Kacchan’, that kid was getting a piece of his mind.}

The kids immediately began whooping and cheering about justice and vengeance. The excited chatter didn't last long however when the villain started griping about getting to Mastermind reminding the others about what was to come.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: A Slice of Life

MM:SFH Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Slice of life

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

The Daily Life of Mastermind

{“Be careful today? I don’t want you getting hurt on the way to school…” Inko fretted.

Izuku rolled his eyes, “Mom, I’ll be fine. Aldera High School is literally a 10-minute walk, I don’t even have to take the train.”

Inko brushed imaginary dust off the shoulders of his blue uniform, “I know, it’s just that there’s so much more crime nowadays with Mastermind on the loose and...I just worry about you, you know that.”}

"When she finds out about him she's going to be devastated." Dabi comments with something akin to regret hidden in his eyes.

{Izuku sighed internally. Yeah, he knew that Mom was worried. He also knew she’d worry less if he’d been born with a quirk. He hid his frustration behind a smile, “I gotta go Mom. I don’t want to be late for the first day of high school!”

She waved at him with the famous Midoriya tears in her eyes as he shouldered his backpack and walked down the road toward his new school. It had been pretty easy to get into. He’d applied to a few other places, including a few that had a track that specialized in analysis and hero support. All of those had taken one look at the red *Quirkless* written on his ID and promptly let him know

that he “wasn’t the right fit” for their schools.}

"Once again, and with feeling, *quirkist bastards*." Jiro snarks in annoyance.

{In the end, it was better this way. Going to a prestigious school would bring attention, something that Izuku couldn’t afford right now. The police hadn’t tried to arrest him since he’d started his hostage situation, but he was almost certain that Nedzu was working hard to try and uncover his identity. It’s what Izuku would do. If they could find out who he was, then they might be able to find the computer program he’d hired La Brava to write that would release his murder plans if his arrest or death was ever trending on the internet, or they’d go after Giran, who also had instructions to release the plans if anything happened to him.}

"A two-prong failsafe is going to be a headache to overcome." Tsukauchi groaned.

{But Izuku knew from experience that no one expected anything from a quirkless kid, especially one who didn’t even stand up to his own bullies. If Izuku Midoriya was ever a suspect for Mastermind, his lack of quirk would instantly clear him of any suspicion. If the police looked past that, then the fact that none of his bullies had died mysteriously in the last year would be brought in as evidence that he obviously “wasn’t capable” of being the villain. What the police wouldn’t know is that Izuku Midoriya, quirkless Deku, was a mask. And if they managed to look past all that? Well, then they were smarter than Izuku gave them credit for, and maybe, just maybe, they deserved to arrest him.}

"An ego doesn't suit the Green Bean." Midnight complains.

"I don't think we'll have a problem with it in our world." Mic comforts.

"Hopefully." Aizawa grumbles.

{“Hey Deku, haven’t you thrown yourself off a bridge yet?” The bully, Makoto Ito, was big, stupid, and obviously trying to fill the void that Katsuki had left by going to UA if the crowd of sycophants surrounding him was any indication. Izuku resisted the urge to glare at him.

“H-hi, I-ito! H-how are y-you today?” It was amazing how quickly people saw weakness when Izuku stuttered. He smirked internally

as Ito puffed his chest out and sneered at him.

“Don’t try to be friends, *Deku*. You’re worthless and don’t you forget it!” With that, Ito shoved him to the ground and turned on his heel to enter the school, followed by his entourage. Izuku stood and brushed himself off. He’d gotten worse from Toga on their first day of training.}

"It's like he's run out of shits to give." Mirko chuckles.

"He's lived like this so long it's become pedantic. Plus he's secretly a now S-rank supervillain, Kid doesn't need to give a shit anymore." Hawks replies.

{He smiled as he thought of his friend. He’d have to remember all the dumb things his bullies said and tell her later. She’d get a kick out of it and they’d giggle about all the ways they kill the idiots. It was a good friendship.}

Toga squeals "That sounds like so much fun!"

{By the time Izuku got to class, he was back to wearing the mask of a weak, quirkless Deku, but underneath, he felt stronger than any of them.}

"I have a mental picture of fainting and vomiting when Mastermind's identity is revealed." Shigiraki grins menacingly "If the fools ever figure it out."

{Izuku walked around the apartment and checked the security system one more time. From the outside, it just looked like any apartment in the red-light district, but the walls were heavily fortified and the security system could probably put UA to shame. And it was all his.

Izuku sighed, he could finally stop smuggling his villain outfit out of the house and changing in Giran’s office!}

"Wonderful he has his own base." Tsukauchi says in a way that makes it clear it's anything but.

{“Nice digs, kid.” Giran leaned up against the doorway in the kitchen.

“Thanks for finding this place for me, Giran. I feel like I’ve finally

made it, you know?"

Giran chuckled, "Sorry to have to tell you this, but you 'made it' a while ago. I can count on one hand the number of villains that have the balls to threaten a top 50 hero on national television, not to mention all of them at once. If you're not careful they'll start calling you the number 1 villain in Japan or some other bullshit."

"Well, it was always my dream to be like All Might."}

Snort "Oh my god!" "Hahahaha!" "That's so fucked up!" "Terrible joke!" "Ya'll need to stop laughing!" "We can't!"

{"Why don't you just live here full time, kid? You don't have to keep living with your mother and doing the whole song and dance routine at school like you're not one of the most powerful villains in Japan right now."

Izuku pulled a soda out of the fridge, "Disappearing would call too much attention to me right now. Missing posters, the police looking for me in two identities. There would be too many chances for them to connect the two, and it would just be too much work when it's easier to just avoid the whole problem. Plus, I'm not ready to leave Mom yet. Despite how much she worries, I still love her and she's been the only one who ever cared about me until the last year. I don't want to put her through that, and I'd miss her too much."}

"Momma's boy." Dabi snorts.

{Giran shrugged, "Suit yourself. You ready for your meeting tonight?"

Izuku nodded, "Just need to get dressed and I'll be on my way. I've been going to these meetings for months, Giran, you don't need to worry about me."

Giran held up his hands in surrender, "All right, all right, I get it, you've got your big boy britches on and everything. I'll just be on my way, don't do anything I wouldn't do."

Izuku crossed his arms, "Giran, would you have threatened all 50 top heroes?"

Giran chuckled, "Good point, kid. Have fun." He waved and

walked out the front door. Izuku went to the closet and pulled out his villain costume. Time to get back to work.}

"Who's gonna die this time!?" Toga bounces in excitement.

{Izuku walked into the Blue Dogs base with his head held high. The gang leader was already waiting for him.

“Mastermind, pleasure to finally meet you. My name is Tanaka. Please, take a seat.”

Izuku sat in the offered chair, “So, what can I do for you?”

Tanaka ran his hand through his hair and smiled condescendingly and Izuku tensed slightly. Something seemed off, but Izuku didn’t know if there was something legitimately wrong, or if he was just among villains.}

"Nah, I'm getting real weasel vibes from that fucker." Dabi snarks.

"If he kills Mastermind before I even get to meet him, I will find a way." Shigiraki growls.

{“We want to rob the Okane Bank. We’re looking for a big haul.”

Izuku nodded, “Should be doable. What are your quirks?”

One of the thugs snarled, “What do you need to know our quirks for?”

Izuku rolled his eyes, “Because it’s normally advisable to use your quirks when robbing a bank. If you’d like a completely quirkless plan, I can do that, but most people don’t go for that option, oddly enough.”}

"Shade." Ashido stretches.

{Once he decided the thug had been sufficiently cowed, he turned back to Tanaka, who was still giving him that same smile that set Izuku’s teeth on edge, “That’s just Takahashi for ya, he’s got a gas manipulation quirk, allows him to control any gas, including the air in people’s lungs. He,” Tanaka jerked his thumb toward another thug standing in the corner of the room, “can see in the dark and she,” he pointed toward a woman leaning against the wall playing with a knife, “can throw any knife with 100% accuracy. I have a strength enhancement quirk and can lift three

times my own body weight. The heavier I am, the more I can lift."

Izuku nodded. This matched up pretty well with the information he'd been able to gather before arriving. At least they weren't trying to lie to him, so why did it feel so off?

"All right, all that's left is the matter of my fee."

Tanaka's smile turned wicked and he pulled out a gun and leveled it at Izuku's head, "How's this for a fee, *pipsqueak*, you give us the plan and we'll let you walk out of here alive."}

"Dumb ways to die~" Kaminari starts singing.

{Izuku looked around the room to find the other two men had their guns trained on him and the woman with the knife-throwing quirk had two knives in each hand. He sighed, this explains why he'd been feeling off the whole meeting. He really should start listening to his gut more often.}

"So many dumb ways to die~" Ashido and Sero joins in.

{As he scanned the room, Izuku weighed his options. He could just fight his way out: he'd escaped pro-heroes before. But then again, the pro-heroes weren't trying to kill him. He eyed the woman with the knives. With her quirk, he'd be walking out of here with at least one stab wound. Not the end of the world, but something he'd prefer to avoid if possible. Stabs were harder to hide than bruises and burns, after all, and he'd rather not make his mom more worried.

On the other hand, he could just give them the plans, but he didn't want word getting out that you could just threaten Mastermind rather than paying. It was bad for business. Izuku thought for another moment before deciding.

"It sounds like you have yourself a deal."

Tanaka put away his gun and smiled, "I knew you'd come around pipsqueak. Now, how about you give us those plans."}

"Dumb ways to die-ie-ie~" Most of 1A sings together.

{As Izuku wrote, he smiled wickedly beneath his mask. Yes, he'd let them have their plans, but a fat lot of good money would do them with what they had coming.

Fun Fact: everyone has enemies willing to pay to bring them down.}

"So many dumb ways to die~" The league joins in.

{“Detective Tsukauchi? There’s been an interesting development on the Okane Bank case.”

Tsukauchi gestured for the officer to continue.

“They’re dead sir.”}

"Called it!" Kaminari smirks.

"Not that difficult to figure out, Zip zap." Dabi snarks.

"Zip zap?" Toga asks.

"He has an electricity quirk." Dabi shrugs.

{The detective did a double take, “I’m sorry, what did you say?”

“The perpetrators of the robbery are all dead.” The officer said, “One was found strangled in his home alongside his family. Another seemingly died in a bar fight, although I doubt it’s a coincidence. Another was found in a back alley, stabbed through the throat. The leader’s body was left in front of the channel 9 news station. He appeared to have been starved and tortured to death. All the murders were done by different people at different times. The only thing linking them was that they were all members of the Blue Dogs gang that robbed Okane Bank last week.”}

"Shit, he sold each of them out to somebody different." Mirko remarks.

"Cutthroat." Hawks agrees.

{Tsukauchi looked at the officer, “And you think Mastermind is behind it.”

The officer shrugged, “It was pretty obvious he was behind the robbery. But why would he eliminate paying customers? Seems like a pretty bad business choice to me. I brought in a guy that had known dealings with the gang. Do you want to talk to him?”

Tsukauchi nodded absently and grabbed the files on Mastermind

and the Okane Bank robbery. He walked into the interrogation room, set the files on the table, and sat down opposite the twitchy young man waiting for him.}

"He looks so terrified." Momo comments.

"I don't blame him." Jiro remarks.

{“All right, let’s just get straight to the point. What can you tell me about the elimination of the Blue Dogs gang?”

The man rubbed his fingers together and looked around the room like he was expecting threats to pop out of the walls at any moment, “It was their own fault.”

True}

"How's Mind-chan gonna handle that quirk?" Toga pouts, her boys not having an answer.

{Tsukauchi tilted his head, “What do mean by that?”

“T-they screwed over the wrong person.”

“You mean Mastermind?” Tsukauchi asked.

The man nodded, “Tanaka wasn’t ever the type to play fair. If he could screw you over to get a dollar, he’d do it every time. Word is he tried that on Mastermind. Held a gun to his head to get the plans for free,” he rushed out, “He should’ve just paid. You don’t mess with Mastermind.”

True}

"This is quite the intimidation tactic." Nedzu comments.

{“You think he killed them to send a message?”

To his surprise, the man shook his head, “Mastermind didn’t kill ‘em”

True}

"Technically." Aizawa grumbles as Tsukauchi glares at the screen.

{“Tanaka had enemies, they all did. But it wasn’t a coincidence that all their enemies suddenly knew their every weakness right

after they pulled that shit.”

True

Tsukauchi stood, “Thank you. You’ve been a big help.”

As soon as the door to the interrogation room closed, he sighed and rubbed his eyes. It took a major idiot to try to screw over someone who had managed to kill a hero while he was in police protection. He put the files back on his desk and stood. Maybe he should call Toshinori and go to dinner. Get away from this case for an hour or two. He nodded and grabbed his coat before calling his friend. At least Mastermind didn’t know about Yagi Toshinori. Tsukauchi shuddered at what would happen if Mastermind figured out how weak All Might really was right now, but his friend had always been super careful with his identity, so they had nothing to worry about.

Right?}

There was a moment of silence as the heroes and students come to a horrible realization. And then they riot. "He knows!" "At least one of the other stories mentioned his weakness!" "What's going to happen to All Might!" "He has a grudge against him!" "He can't do it!" "All Might can't die!" It takes a terribly long time for the theater to be calm enough to continue; when it does, the crowd can only try to relax.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Secrets and guilt

V:TGG Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Secrets and guilt

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Anxiety

{Izuku had to pause in the middle of putting on his school uniform as the weight of what he'd done last night came crashing down on him. He'd been too tired last night to really process what had happened, but now the panic was back with a vengeance.

He'd punched Eraserhead!}

"Forgot about that for a while there." Dabi snorts.

{Eraser had to be so mad at him. He'd just been trying to get Izuku to a hospital but then he'd panicked about what would happen if they figured out who he was, which meant that *Mom* would figure out what he'd been doing, and she would be so worried and scared and he really didn't want to do that to her, so he had to get away, but if he wanted to get away, he had to make Eraser let go of him, and he really wasn't thinking that clearly, and the first stupid thought he'd had was to punch a hero in the nose! Whatever respect Eraser had for him was gone, not that he could've gained that much considering that Izuku was a quirkless middle schooler who couldn't even aim his slingshot correctly, but that didn't matter because it was gone now and he was never going to get it back.}

"I've had worse from closer friends." Aizawa deadpans.

"I said I was sorry!" Mic defended at the same time Midnight whined "It was one time!"

{*Good work, Deku,* his inner Kacchan said, *you managed to fuck things up even worse than you usually do.*}

Bakugo is so done.

{He didn't want to have to face Eraserhead again. Maybe he would die before he had to see him! That would be good. Maybe he would go out tonight and there would be some villain attack, maybe even another trigger villain, and Izuku would just step in instead of getting a hero, and then it'd all be over quickly and he wouldn't have to deal with Eraser's anger, or Amplifier's disappointment, or Mom's worry, or Kacchan's…}

"Nope!" "No!" "Fuck no!" "Don't even!"

{Izuku shook his head forcefully, he wasn't supposed to be thinking things like that. Besides, with his luck that probably wouldn't work anyway. Even if everything went well and he died, the fact that he didn't go get a hero for such a big villain would be suspicious, and then what would happen if they realized he'd *wanted* to...and then they'd look into Kacchan and he wouldn't be able to go to UA and it would all be Izuku's fault!}

"I'm not your responsibility!" Bakugo growls at the screen while Kirishima pats him on the shoulder.

{Izuku shook his head again and winced as he realized he had a headache he'd been ignoring. His ribs hurt more than his head did, though. He knew he probably had a little concussion, but it was nothing compared to that time Kacchan had pushed him off the slide on accident and he'd hit his head, so Izuku wasn't that worried. He shrugged off his shirt so he could put some cream on his ribs, tensing as the cold cream hit his skin. After that, he finished getting dressed and grabbed his backpack. He didn't want to be late for school.}

"Bro, you good?" Sero turned to Bakugo, who had his fingers pressing on his temples "I can't remember if I ever pushed him off a slide; or if it was an accident. How do you think I'm doing?"

"Fair."

{Katsuki tuned out the extras that surrounded him as he ate his lunch. The old hag had packed the extra-spicy curry today, so he knew it was gonna be good.

“Look guys, it’s Deku.” One of the extras at another table called out and sure enough, Katsuki looked up to see Deku walking into the cafeteria with his shoulders hunched. The extras sitting at his table looked to see how he’d react, but he just scoffed and turned back to his lunch. Heroes didn’t pick on their classmates, no matter how much they deserved it, and he was going to be the best hero!}

"He doesn't fucking deserve it!" Bakugo is running out of very thin patience.

"He'll learn bro remember this is the one who sees the problem he just has to work on the details." Kirishima manages to calm him slightly.

{“What’s up, Deku?” The extra with extendable fingers asked. “Still alive?”}

"Fucking scumbag," Jiro sneers as Momo lays her hand on the girl's shoulder in an attempt to keep her calm.

{A small group of their classmates had surrounded Deku by this point and even some of the extras at Katsuki’s table had gotten up to go join the fun. The extras were grinning and laughing like Fingers had just made the funniest joke on earth, but Deku himself was just staring silently at the ground.

“Why so quiet?” Another extra, this one with boulders for hair, asked. “Finally realize that no one cares what you have to say?”}

"Worthless bully." Uraraka growls.

{Well, that might be *true*, but it probably wasn’t very nice to say. Katsuki knew he was acting like a bit of a hypocrite. It wasn’t like anything they were saying to Deku was new. Katsuki himself had always prided himself on being especially creative with his insults, after all, so in comparison, these extra’s insults were boring and almost as plain as Deku’s face. So it wasn’t like the extras were saying anything that Deku hadn’t heard before or anything they hadn’t heard Katsuki himself say.}

"The boy has a long way to go." Gran remarks.

{But Katsuki wanted to be like All Might, which meant that he wasn't going to waste his time insulting people anymore! His classmates didn't have any hope of being heroes, though, so it was ok for them to insult Deku, right? Or was that wrong too? What would All Might do if he was here?}

"Yeah, come on, figure it out." Kaminari murmured with hope.

{Boulders had taken that moment to punch Deku in the ribs, making him gasp in pain. Hmm, either Boulders had gotten stronger or Deku had already had sore ribs. Had some of the other extras given him a beating when Katsuki wasn't looking? Thinking back, Deku had been walking kinda funny all day, like he was sore or something, and goodness knows that the nerd wasn't athletic enough to be sore from exercise.}

"You have *no idea*." Dabi chuckled.

{"Hey, save some of that air for those who deserve it, nerd!"

Katsuki looked to some of the teachers who were eating at a small table in the corner. They had to know what was happening, it wasn't like those extras were being quiet. So why weren't they doing anything? Why hadn't they *ever* done anything? Wasn't it their job to keep kids from getting hurt or something?}

"How illegal is it to burn down a school?" Todoroki asks.

Iida goes to scold him but stops when Izuku distractedly replies "Depends on whether or not you can make it look like an accident."

{What would All Might do if he were one of them. He'd probably tell those kids off for being *unheroic*. But the teachers weren't doing that. Katsuki watched them as the extras kept insulting Deku and one of them even glanced over and chuckled before turning back to his lunch. That...well it was normal, but it didn't seem *right*. Why wasn't anyone doing anything?}

"All in favor of tearing down that school!" Hagakure cheers. The vast majority raise their hand.

{Why wasn't *he* doing anything?

The thought made Katsuki stop. Was he supposed to step in? All Might probably would, but that brought him back to the whole hypocrisy thing. What gave him the right to step in and protect

Deku when just a month ago, he was one of the ones...well, maybe *attacking him* wasn't the right way to phrase it, but still. Even if he were to step in, Deku probably wouldn't trust him at all, and all the useless extras might think that Katsuki was admitting that Deku was better than him, or that he was weak…}

Frustration is palpable throughout the crowd reminding themselves that change takes time and he is still learning.

{The curry turned to sawdust in his mouth, spicy sawdust, but still flavorless as Deku silently picked the remains of his lunch off the floor and threw them away after one of the extras had knocked it out of his hands. He didn't really know how to describe what he was feeling, he just knew he didn't like it. He was the best, he'd always been the best, and if there was anything the best *wasn't*, it was a coward, so this annoying feeling couldn't be fear.

Could it?}

"Everyone feels fear, All Might included." Midoriya sighs quietly.

{Izuku walked through the hardware store much more confidently this time, now that he actually knew what he was looking for and how to find it. He should have just picked his pipes up when he left last night's fight, but even though the concussion hadn't been that bad, both it and the pain from being thrown into a wall had made it difficult to focus on anything besides getting away so Eraser wouldn't tell Mom about his vigilantism.}

"Am I gonna be there," Kaminari bounces in place "please let me be there."

{Which meant that the pipes had been left to rot among all the other garbage in that alley and Izuku needed to replace them. He couldn't bring himself to regret giving them to Eraser though. If he'd kept using his capture weapon, there was a good chance he would have gotten hurt, so the pipes were obviously the better option. Not that Eraser's capture weapon was bad! It was actually really cool and worked against a lot of villains so that he didn't hurt them any more than he had to and…

Oh, right, Izuku was here to get pipes.}

"Your spirals, while inconvenient, are also fascinating." Iida comments.

"Shame I can never remember my panic analysis." Izuku complains.

{He should probably buy a few backups to keep in his closet too, just in case he ever lost them again. Yeah, that'd be a good idea. And zip-ties. It wasn't a big problem when he helped heroes, but Izuku had been having problems restraining the small-time villains he was able to take down on his own. Most of the time he was able to find some kind of rope or cloth to tie them up with, but it would be nice to not have to worry about that anymore.}

"At least he's improving his gear while replacing some of it." Aizawa grumbles.

"I wish he would get some armor though." Mic comments.

"Agreed." Midnight adds.

{Izuku was extremely proud of himself when he managed to get to the checkout stand with only the items on his list, unlike last time when he'd ended up with a lot of other stuff too. To his surprise, his cashier was the kid with the electricity quirk he'd talked to last time. What was his name again? Oh, right, Kaminari!}

"I'm here!" Kaminari cheers.

"Congratulations!" Ashido claps.

"Dude I can't wait for one of these stories to include us." Sero comments.

"Careful what you wish for." Bakugo warns.

{"Hey dude!" Kaminari smiled as Izuku put his basket down on the counter, "Nice to see you back here!"

"T-thanks." Izuku said. "Um, how is your electricity training coming? Were any of the electricians willing to teach you?"

Kaminari nodded eagerly, "One of them actually offered to make a temporary apprentice! I'm learning all about the basics and how circuits work and stuff. I didn't even realize that my quirk might not be effective against a flying villain, isn't that insane?"}

"Make more flying Nomu, noted." Shigiraki murmurs to himself.

{Izuku nodded. That was one of the main limitations of electric heroes, they couldn't actually electrocute something that wasn't grounded. But the way that he talked about villains specifically, "Are you going to be a hero?"

Kaminari shrugged and smiled, "That's the hope. My quirk is flashy enough for it, so it's just a question of if I'm actually smart enough to get in. Cash or card?"

Izuku smiled encouragingly as he handed over a handful of cash, "You can do it!"}

"Hell yeah!" "We got you!" "You got this!" Kaminari blushes uncertain how to respond to such support.

{Kaminari put the pipes and zip ties in a plastic bag, "Thanks, dude! I'm sure gonna try! Hey, what are you making anyway? You were buying pipes last time."

Izuku didn't know how to respond to that, so he just shrugged.

Kaminari laughed, "Alright, keep your secrets dude. Good luck with whatever it is though."

Izuku nodded, "And good luck with your apprenticeship! See you later!"

Izuku had never really been lucky, in fact, he'd been mostly the opposite, but he was grateful for Kaminari's words anyway. He'd run into Eraserhead eventually, and then he'd need all the luck he could get.}

As the screen fades low chatter spreads through the room as people refill snacks and drinks. Some of the students dutifully stick to their diets while others take this chance for a cheat day. After a few minute, pass Headcase brings their attention back to the screen as the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Nedzu's personal student

CC:SS Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Nedzu's personal student

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Welcome to UA

{The opening ceremonies were...interesting, for lack of a better word. Izuku didn't see Katsuki anywhere, which was honestly a good thing, but it was still kind of worrying. While Izuku wouldn't put it beyond him to just skip the assembly and hang out behind the dumpsters or something, he didn't think Katsuki would pull something like that on the first day! Oh well, if he made a poor first impression, then that wasn't Izuku's problem.}

"This version of the kid is becoming a petty little bitch and I'm enjoying every second of it." Dabi smirks.

{The general muttering of the students died down and Izuku turned to the stage to see Present Mic striding out onto the stage, "Hey, hey hey, everybody! How's everybody doing this morning?"}

"Holy shit, we actually get to see orientation!" Kaminari exclaimed in surprise.

"What did your whole class miss it?" Shigiraki griped.

"Yup!" responds the majority of 1A, who do not elaborate.

{To Izuku's surprise, Present Mic's enthusiasm was met with a general non-response. He didn't know why, this was Present Mic, the voice hero! He had his own radio show and everything…

“Um, Midoriya?” One of his classmates, the bald one, said softly, “Are you aware that you’re mumbling again?”

Izuku slammed his mouth shut and blushed, “S-sorry! I’ll, um, I’ll try to stop…”

“Ugh, you’re all idiots!” The curly-haired girl leaned over Mei’s lap and shoved a pencil in his face.

Izuku took it hesitantly, not wanting to be rude, “Um, thank you, but ..why?”

She rolled her eyes, “Put it in your mouth. If you start talking, it’ll fall out.”}

A smack rings out as a palm meets a forehead.

{Izuku’s eyes widened. It was such a simple solution that Izuku didn’t know why he hadn’t ever thought of it before, “T-thank you so much!”}

"We're idiots." Izuku whispers to himself.

{“Whatever,” she settled back into her seat and crossed her arms, “just use your chew toy so the rest of us can hear the damn assembly.”

Izuku nodded frantically and bit down on the pencil as he turned back to the stage. Present Mic, having failed spectacularly at getting a response from the crowd, had apparently just decided to move onto the next order of business, “Well everybody, welcome to UA high, the premier hero school in Japan! To our upperclassmen, welcome back, and good luck with your next year of studies. To our brand new first years...Congratulations! Not just anybody can walk these halls, and it takes a lotta hard work and dedication to sit where you’re sitting. That being said, don’t go getting complacent little listeners! You’ve each got your own stars that you’re reaching for and you’re each gonna have to work extra hard, got it? So you’re all gonna have to go beyond….”

“PLUS ULTRA!!!”}

"PLUS ULTRA!!!"

{This time, at least, the students responded exactly how Present Mic wanted, earning a wide smile as he skipped back to the line

of chairs across the stage where all the teachers and faculty were sitting, two of which were empty for some reason. Were there more teachers that weren't at the assembly? Or did they set up extra chairs for some other reason?}

"The cryptid and the newbie." Aoyama snickers.

{The next part of the assembly consisted of the faculty all introducing themselves briefly and Izuku dropped the pencil in his mouth twice as he instinctively started to ramble about each hero's quirk. He ended up taking out his own notebook and writing down his observations instead, adding subtle observations that he was only able to notice up close. He was at UA! He'd be learning from pros! It was still so surreal.}

"And here we have the elusive fanboy in his natural habitat." Mic jokes.

"What?" Aizawa questions.

"Seriously Sho, watch some documentaries." Midnight chides, confusing the man more.

{After each of the gathered teachers had gotten the chance to introduce themselves, Present Mic stood again, "Alright, Listeners! Some of you may have noticed a couple empty chairs up here next to us awesome teachers! This is because there are two teachers you all haven't met yet! You upperclassmen know who one of them is, but for the first years, you might be lucky, or unlucky, enough to see our local cryptid in the halls. Aizawa Shouta, pro hero name: Eraserhead, is off hazing his own first-year class, so wish them luck. They're gonna need it."}

"Eraserhead did what?" Shigiraki says very confusedly.

{Izuku's eyes widened. The underground hero?! He couldn't beat All Might as Izuku's favorite hero, because *All Might*, but he was a close second. He fought practically quirkless and could take away other people's quirks at will! And he was a teacher here? What did Present Mic mean by hazing? Was that where Katsuki was?

Izuku felt a brief surge of jealous anger. Katsuki got to learn from one of Izuku's favorite teachers? He wouldn't even appreciate the nuances of Eraserhead's fighting style! Unbidden, an image of Katsuki getting his explosions erased as he was tangled in Eraserhead's capture weapon came to his mind and Izuku

snickered quietly. Ok, so maybe Katsuki learning from one of his favorite heroes wouldn't be *all* bad…}

"Most cathartic moment of my life, one I will always remember fondly." Izuku says airily.

{“But that still leaves one more teacher that you listeners haven’t met yet!” Present Mic continued. “He’s a special new addition to our staff this year! You first-year hero students will be in for a real treat because here he is, the number one hero, the symbol of peace, and the newest member of our staff...All Might!”

Izuku’s jaw dropped and he knew he wasn’t the only one as a booming laugh echoed around the auditorium and the number one hero himself strode out from behind the curtain, “I am here...to help mold the next generation of heroes!”

The auditorium exploded in applause and Izuku added to it wholeheartedly. He was going to be in the same building as *All Might!* This must be why he was in town! But...how was he going to teach classes if he only had three hours in his hero form? Did he still have three hours? Or had saving Kacchan from the sludge villain cut down on that time? What were the repercussions of him going over his limit?}

"He's such a caring boy, I'm lucky to have met him." All Might comment's proudly.

{There was a clatter as the pencil dropped to his lap again, and Izuku hurriedly put it back in his mouth so he wouldn’t mutter. Thankfully, no one could have heard him over the applause, but it would still be better to think about that when he was alone...maybe he could come up with some way to counteract or even just minimize the effects of his injury....or maybe Mei could come up with some sort of illusion tech so he wouldn’t have to use his hero time to teach? But that would involve telling her about All Might’s other form and he couldn’t betray the hero’s trust like that…}

"I'll make it anyway!" Mei cheers excited for yet another new project.

{Later. He could think about that later. For now, though, All Might had taken a seat in one of the empty chairs that were almost ridiculously too small for him and Nedzu was climbing a small set of steps up the side of the podium, “Hello students! Am I a mouse? A dog? A bear? What’s important is that I’m the

principal! UA has a spectacular legacy and…”

Nedzu began to talk about the history of the school and Izuku was on the edge of his seat as he listened...for the first ten minutes. Mei had lost interest after three and began to sketch out invention ideas again. Izuku really tried to pay attention. This man was going to be his teacher! He couldn’t just tune him out! His classmates seemed just as bored as he was and eventually Izuku decided that he could probably just apologize if he needed to and turned to flesh out his analyses of the staff. Occasionally, Mei would poke his arm and point to a particular diagram, asking an unspoken question and he would think for a moment before writing something beside her drawing. It went like that for another fifteen minutes before Nedzu finally stopped talking.

“Ah, but I’m getting carried away!” Nedzu clapped his paws together, waking up a few of the students that had fallen asleep during his speech. “You all have bright futures ahead of you and we are so excited to help you cultivate that light. So, as the principal of UA, congratulations and welcome to UA high school!”}

"I no longer have a problem with missing that." Uraraka comments.

"Me too, kero."

{There was a hesitant round of applause that got louder as Nedzu descended the steps and the teachers all left the stage to go retrieve their classes. Within a few minutes, Powerloader was leading them back to the classroom. As they were walking back, the kid in their class with the shark quirk placed his hand on Izuku’s shoulder and patted it consolingly, “I’m sorry, Midoriya. I don’t know how you’re gonna survive being Nedzu’s personal student if he’s really that long-winded all the time.”

“He wasn’t that way during the entrance exam.” Izuku tried. “But maybe that was just because he didn’t want to distract me as I was hacking UA.”

He ended up running into the girl walking in front of him as his classmates stopped walking in shock, “You hacked UA during the entrance exam?! What the fuck?”}

A few people chuckle in understanding.

{“I didn’t get very far!” Izuku defended, waving his hand in front

of him nervously, “I think they just wanted to see how I approached unsolvable problems, that’s it!”

“Yeah,” Mei said, “and I’m sure it didn’t hurt that you’d already gotten a head start before the exam even started.”

Izuku turned to her in betrayal, “Mei!”}

"Traitor!" Izuku cries dramatically as Mei cackles.

{Their classmates kept their distance from the two for the rest of the way back to the lab. When they got there, everyone sat down at their tables and Izuku went back to his room, noticing for the first time that there was a small school desk that had been placed outside the door, probably for when the class had a lecture instead of lab time. Before he could decide if he was supposed to go into his room or sit at the desk though, Powerloader cleared his throat to get their attention.

“We have about twenty minutes until class officially ends.” He said. “So, why don’t each of you introduce yourselves? I know that the support course has a lot more individual work than the business course or the hero course, but it will still be helpful to get to know your classmates. Who wants to go first?”

The kid with the shark quirk shrugged and stood up, “What’dya wanna know?”

“Just say your name and quirk, dumbass.” The curly-haired girl griped.}

"I like her." Dabi smirks.

{Izuku felt his stomach sink. Yeah, he knew it was coming, but it still would have been nice if he didn’t have to reveal his quirklessness right off the bad. Oh well, they already thought he was creepy, now there’d just be pity mixed in.

“Also include why you chose support.” Powerloader added. “It’ll be helpful to know each other’s motivations.”}

Izuku readies his notebook and pen.

{“Alright.” The kid with the shark quirk shrugged again. “I’m Ryou Hanzou. My quirk’s Great White, and I wanna make waterproof tech. My quirk lets me do anything a shark can do,

which means I can breathe underwater, so I spent a lot of time swimming as a kid and would have totally spent weeks at a time in the ocean, but my phone and video games wouldn't work, so I'm gonna fix that."}

Tsu perks up at that "If he exists in our world I'd be a happy test subject."

"You mean product tester." Mei corrects.

{Izuku had never realized that would be an inconvenience to people with amphibious quirks, but he supposed that it made sense. Most technologies were made to be used by people in the air, and even most waterproof technology had a limit of either time or depth. Hanzou would definitely have a niche as an inventor if he could figure out how to move past those limitations.

The class's eyes turned to the bald kid with pointed ears, who was sitting next to Hanzou, "Oh, I'm next? Ok, um, my name is Shin Shiguro and my quirk is called Goblin. I, uh, instinctively know the location of any non-living object I've ever touched. The accuracy goes down with time though, so if I haven't touched something for ten years, I'd be able to tell you the city it's in, but not any more specific than that. I, uh, just like building things."}

"There's nothing wrong with simplicity." Shoji comments.

{He sat down almost before he'd finished speaking and the class turned to the next student, which was the girl with curly hair.

"I'm Akane Kohaku and this mess," the girl gestured to her curls, which rattled slightly as they caught the light, "is my quirk. It's called Copper Wire and it's a total pain to cut. Yes, it conducts electricity, yes, I use it in my inventions, no, you can't touch it. Got it?"}

"Fair." "Understandable." "You do you girl."

{The introductions continued like that for the rest of the class until it got to Mei, "Hi! Mei Hatsume, future CEO of Hatsume Industries! My quirk is Zoom and it lets me see up to five kilometers away! My babies are gonna change the world!"

Izuku chuckled quietly as he noticed their classmates instinctively lean back from Mei's enthusiasm. He was finally getting used to it

himself, but it was still funny to see how other people reacted to her. Izuku noticed that the class was looking at him and he froze as he realized he was next. In fact, he was the last student to introduce himself. Hesitantly, he stood up.

“Um, I’m Izuku Midoriya. I like analyzing heroes and quirks, so I want to be a support analyst and help heroes work smarter and be better.” Izuku glanced at the clock. Class should be ending any second now. He could do this. Just bite the bullet. “And I’m quirkless.”

The bell rang.}

"Saved by the bell." Izuku sighs.

"You're not going to like bolt out the door are you?" Mei asks chuckling.

"..."

"Izu-kun?"

"..."

"Izu-kun!"

"Oh look the next chapter is starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: That sounds familiar

See original fic for OC images

D?ITHSP... Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

That sounds familiar

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Mutations

"Before we begin I ask that all questions be held till the end of the chapter." Headcase smirks ominously.

{“Hey! I’m looking for Deku, is he here?”}

"Mirio, is that you?" Hado shakes his shoulders.

"Sounds like it," Toogata laughs.

{Inko looked at the young man suspiciously, “Are you one of his friends?”

The young man smiled and Inko was reminded of All Might, “Yep!”

“Hmm,” She hesitated, “What’s your hero name?”

He put both hands on his hips and struck his chest out, “Le Million! Why?”

Inko gave a tense smile, “Most of Izuku’s friends are pro heroes. Someone his own age...let’s just say kids have pretended to be his friends as pranks before.”}

"That sounds awful." Amijiki comments.

{Le Million frowned, “That sucks.”

Inko nodded in agreement as Izuku came up behind her carrying his duffel bag, “Thanks, Mom.” He looked at the newcomer, “You must be Mirio Toogata! Nighteye’s intern?”

The boy nodded, “That’s right! And you’re Deku, right? I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“Don’t believe everything you hear,” Izuku said blushing, “Nighteye and the others tend to exaggerate.”}

"No they don't." Uraraka teases.

{Toogata laughed, “Sir told me you were too modest for your own good! Here, let me take that for you.” He grabbed the duffle out of Izuku’s hand.

“Have fun this week!” Inko waved as the boys left, “Be safe!”

“We will Mom!” Izuku called back. “Bye!”

“She worries a lot, doesn’t she?” Toogata asked.}

"Yes." Izuku deadpans.

{Izuku nodded, “Her heart’s in the right place though. I know she doesn’t really want me to be a hero, she’s pretty bad at hiding it actually, but she’s willing to support me even though it makes her worry.” He shrugged. “That’s more than most people can say, so I count myself pretty lucky.” He smiled. “So what’s it like being Nighteye’s intern?”

Toogata beamed, “Super fun! But also really difficult. I didn’t have a great handle on my quirk when I was recruited, but he’s put me through the wringer the last few months and now I’m one of the best students at UA.” He rubbed the back of his neck. “But actually, recently my quirk kind of... mutated, and I’m basically having to master it all over again. I was hoping you could help me with it this week, if that’s ok?”}

Yagi's eyes widen "Oh." He whispers in understanding.

{Izuku nodded, “I’d love to. Analyzing quirks is really fun for me and I love coming up with ideas to help people improve. Your quirk is some kind of permeation, right? I remember you made a

big splash at the sports festival."

Toogata went slightly pink, "Uhh, yeah. I really should have listened to sensei when he suggested wearing a uniform infused with my DNA, but I thought that'd count as a costume or support item and give me an unfair advantage so…"

Izuku nodded, "I understand where you're coming from, but that is a pretty big disadvantage."

Toogata laughed again, "Yeah, you get used to it. I hardly even get embarrassed anymore, except when I'm naked on national television, apparently."}

The crowd chuckles and giggles at the thought.

{Izuku pulled out a small notebook as they got on the train, "So, you said your quirk had mutated. What's it like now?"

"Well," Toogata paused thoughtfully, like he was trying to be careful about what he said, "It's gotten kind of a...super strength aspect to it now? And some speed. But if I use it for more than a few punches at a time, I get hairline fractures in my bones."}

"Wait..." Todoroki squints confused. Izuku gulps.

{Izuku hummed thoughtfully, "That's a pretty big mutation. It almost sounds like your quirk is too powerful for your body."}

"That sounds familiar." Kaminari considers.

{Toogata chuckled awkwardly, "Yeah, we thought it might be something like that…"

Izuku was already taking notes and jotting down different ideas, "I think I'm gonna need to see your quirk in action before I can come up with anything concrete, but it's probably better if we wait until we're at Nighteye's agency before we do that. Public quirk usage and all that."

Toogata nodded, "So you're gonna be starting UA this year, right?"

"Yep!" Izuku practically bounced with excitement, "It's seriously a dream come true! I've wanted to be a hero ever since I was a toddler. I just can't believe it's finally happening."}

Smiles light up with pride for their classmate or student.

{“Do you know what class you’re going to be in?”

Izuku nodded, “1A. Normally, I’m not sure they’d put in a class where I was already friends with the teacher, but I think they knew Eraser would be ok with teaching...someone like me.”

Toogata frowned in confusion, “Someone like you? You mean someone who’s already worked in the field?”

Izuku sighed, “I mean someone quirkless.”

Toogata’s jaw dropped, “You’re *quirkless*?”

Izuku fidgeted uncomfortably. Why’d he say that? Why’d he have to go and ruin it? And Toogata had been so nice too.}

"Hey I don't care about anyone's quirk status!" Mirio calls out.

{“Sorry dude,” Toogata said, shaking his head, “I’m not sure I’m worthy to be around someone as impressive as you. I for sure thought you had some kind of analysis quirk from what Sir told me about you. Has there ever been a quirkless hero before?”}

"See." Toogata grins.

{Izuku stared at him, “You mean, you don’t think less of me because I don’t have a quirk? You think it’s...cool?”

Toogata nodded, “I guess you probably don’t hear that a lot, do you?”

Izuku shook his head slowly.

“Well you should.” Toogata said, clapping him on the back. “I was made fun of for my quirk too. Pretty much everyone told me it was too weak or had too many drawbacks. That there was no way I could be a hero. I almost believed them for a while. But then Sir took me under his wing and made me into who I am today. So, no, I’m not gonna judge you or tell you that you can’t be a hero because I can see you’ve got what it takes in here.” He poked Izuku in the chest, then his eyes widened. “Oh, no, you’re crying. What happened? What did I do? Did I say something wrong?”}

"Their happy tears." "That's normal." "You get used to it."

{Izuku shook his head and wiped his eyes, “They’re happy tears, I promise. Sorry,” he laughed, “I’ve always been kinda a crybaby.”

“No problem,” Toogata said, “I think you’re pretty cool.”

It wasn’t long until they reached their stop and they walked the rest of the way to Sir Nighteye’s agency, chatting about heroes who had recently debuted. They walked in the door and were greeted by a woman with blue skin.

“Aww! You must Deku!”

Izuku nodded, “You’re Bubble Girl! It’s nice to meet you!”

Bubble Girl nodded, “Likewise. Sir asked me to show you where you’ll be staying this week, then you’ll be meeting him in his office. I think he has some cases he wants you to take a look at.”

“Aww…” Toogata sighed, “I wanted Deku to help me with my quirk!”}

"Wait you turn Mirio." Hado scolds playfully.

{“I’m sure there’ll be time for that later, Le Million, but Sir takes first priority.”

“It’s ok!” Toogata smiled, “I’ll just be practicing in the gym.” He turned to Izuku. “Come find me when Sir’s done with you.”

Izuku nodded as Toogata left and Bubble Girl led him to Nighteye’s office. When he walked in, Nighteye was busy scribbling away at his desk, so Izuku took a moment to look around the room. He knew Nighteye used to be All Might’s sidekick but, wow, he was almost a bigger fanboy than Izuku used to be. He shifted uncomfortably under the number one hero’s gaze. Even though the posters, it felt like All Might was judging him.}

"I forgot about his problem with All Might for a while there." Ojirou comments.

"What's the poor thing going to do during school?" Hagakure asks in concern.

"Let's just hope that world's All Might can keep his opinions to himself." Sato prays.

{Izuku shook his head and turned his attention to the bookshelves instead. He had people who believed in him now. He was Deku, a highly respected analyst who had worked with more pros than many people would ever meet. All Might was just one more in the list of people who told him he couldn't, no different than Kacchan or his teachers. He took a deep breath.}

"Yeah!" "That's right!" "You're going to prove them wrong!"

{"Sorry about that, Deku, I had to finish the paperwork from the case we closed yesterday."

"The kidnapping case?"

Nighteye nodded, "The leader had a paralyzing quirk, just like you thought."

"Bubble Girl said you had some other cases for me to look at…"

"Yes, but I don't just want you to analyze while you're here," Nighteye went over to the cabinet and grabbed a handful of files, "I want you to observe how to handle a case from beginning to end. For example, we received a report yesterday of a museum robbery," He opened the paper-thin file in front of Izuku, "Here is the evidence we retrieved from the scene and we'll be collaborating with the police. What would you do first?"}

"Pay extra attention, students." Nedzu commands. "Nighteye was one of the best, so treat this as a guest lecture."

"Yes, Sensei!" is chorused all around.

{Izuku looked through the file, mostly a list of what was stolen, the damage done to the doors and display cases, and the data from the security cameras.

"The cameras were turned off?"

"Yes," Nighteye said, "But none of the cameras were broken."

Izuku thought for a moment, "We're probably looking for someone with a jamming quirk or some sort of technology manipulation, so I'd ask the police to run a list of those, but there's also the possibility of someone simply hacking into the system, so they should run a list of known hackers as well. If it *is* a hacker, we should look at the system history because they

might have left a trail. With a high profile robbery like this, there's a strong probability that the culprit has committed smaller crimes in the past, so cross reference the quirk and hacker lists with small robberies where the cameras were turned off within the past five years."}

"Not bad." Endeavor comments.

{He looked to Nighteye, who looked a little less stern than usual, "Good work. There are a few other possibilities that you could investigate, however…"

For the next few hours, Nighteye took Izuku through some of their current cases and educated him on the proper procedures for an investigation and how to work with the police to make sure all the evidence was cataloged and the villains were taken into custody. By the end, Izuku's brain hurt a little, but his cheeks also hurt from smiling too wide, so he figured it was alright.

"Also, Deku, I think it would be a good idea for you to get a private investigator's license. It will be redundant once you receive your full hero's license, but I believe you would find it useful in the meantime."

Izuku nodded, "I'll bring it up with Nedzu once school gets started since I think he wants to have private lessons with me. I'm sure he's got some resources I can use to get it quickly."}

"That I do." Nedzu chuckles.

{Nighteye nodded, "That's good. Just don't forget that the purpose of those lessons will be to learn, not to take over the world."}

Headcase snorts and fails miserably at disguising it as a cough.

{"I'll keep that in mind." Izuku laughed. "If we're finished, I promised Toogata I'd help him with his quirk."

Nighteye waved him away and grabbed a few more files to work on, "I don't often patrol like the other heroes you've interned with thus far, so I will simply see you tomorrow."

Izuku smiled and left, closing the door behind him as he headed down toward where he thought the gym was. It took him a few minutes to find since he took a wrong turn once and had to get

directions from Centipeder, but soon enough he was peeking through the door to see if Toogata was still there.

"...You'll get it, young Toogata, I know you will."}

"And there's the idiot." Aizawa grumbles.

"Are you not gonna say anything?" Mic questions All Might.

"I find it best not to." All Might replies; not so subtly eying Torino and Recovery Girl.

{Izuku hurriedly ducked back outside and held himself flat against the wall. What was All Might doing here? Didn't he have a falling out with Sir Nighteye years ago? And why was he in his skeletal form in front of Toogata? Did he already run out of time today?}

"Oh." Bakugo whispers in realization.

{Izuku could still hear the conversation filtering through the walls.

"I know, it's just so hard getting used to this much power. It's so different than my permeation!" Toogata sighed, "But I've asked Deku to help me out, so hopefully he'll help me work out some of the kinks."

"Deku?" All Might sounded confused, "Who's that?"

Izuku could practically hear Toogata's smile, "He's this super awesome quirk analyst that's been helping out in the underground for almost a year now. He doesn't interact with daylight heroes much, so I'm not surprised you haven't heard of him, but Sir talks about him all the time."

"Ahh," All Might said, "I suppose that makes sense. When are you supposed to meet him?"

"Actually, I'm supposed to be meeting him right now. Well, as soon as Sir's done with him, but they should have finished by now. I told him to meet me here." He paused, "Maybe I should go look for him, make sure he didn't get lost."}

"Not for very long." Izuku says defensively.

{"Very well, young Toogata." All Might said, "I need to get to an

appointment with Recover Girl, so I'll see you tomorrow."

Izuku quickly ran around a corner so he wouldn't be seen and hopefully All Might would walk in the other direction. He almost sighed in relief when Toogata rounded the corner by himself. He really wasn't ready to face All Might today.}

"But will he ever be ready?" Todoroki considers.

{"Hey, Deku!" Toogata said cheerfully, "I was just looking for you. You didn't get lost, did you?"

"Only a little," Izuku said shakily, "Centipeder helped me out. So, are you ready for me to see your quirk?"

"Yeah!" Toogata yelled and led Izuku into the thankfully empty gym. They made their way to the corner where a series of punching bags were set up.

"So, this is kind of what my quirk started as," Toogata passed a hand through one of the punching bags, "I can turn my entire body intangible, but if I do that all at once, I'll just fall straight into the floor, which will spit me back out once I turn tangible again. While I'm intangible, I can't see, hear, or breathe because light, sound, and air just pass right through me."}

"That's inconvenient." Twice comments "**Perfection!**"

{Izuku nodded and pulled out a notebook, "Ok, so you said you've pretty much mastered this part of your quirk, right? You know how to work around the drawbacks?" Toogata nodded. "Ok, what about the mutation you mentioned?"

Toogata nodded and concentrated. His veins started glowing red with power and he passed his hand through the punching bag again, but this time without turning intangible. Izuku shielded his eyes from the flying sand and braced himself to stay on his feet despite the massive wind.}

"What the fuck!?"

{"So...yeah," Toogata said, "That's the super strength aspect. I can do a few punches like that but any more than two or three and my bones start breaking. It's just hairline fractures so far, but I don't want to get into a fight where my choices are to break my body or fail to save someone, you know?"}

"Hold up."

{Izuku nodded, muttering quickly as his hand flew across the page. “Ok,” he said after about a minute, “Do you know yet if you’re able to adjust your power output?”

Toogata shrugged, “I’ve never tried before.”

Izuku put his notebook away, “That’s what we’ll start with then. Try punching the next punching bag using your strength, but don’t break through it.”

Three punching bags later, Toogata still hadn’t managed to throw a punch without destroying anything. Izuku rubbed the bridge of his nose, “Ok, I think we need a new approach. I noticed the last few times, the red veins only appear in the arm you’re punching with. Is that where you’re focusing your quirk?”

Toogata nodded, “I’m used to only powering parts of my body at a time since that’s how I use my intangibility.”

“Ok, well then this is probably going to be counterintuitive, but try using your quirk to power your entire body at the same time.”

“Ok…” Toogata said skeptically but shifted into a battle stance. Within a few seconds, red veins had appeared all over his body, but they disappeared a few seconds later, only to be replaced by crackling white lightning.}

"This is not happening."

{“What the…” Toogata’s eyes widened and he lost control of his quirk, the lightning fizzling out into nothing, “What was *that*?”

Izuku was smiling widely, “That was your quirk! Apparently, spreading out the power allows it to release more energy, almost in a static electricity kind of way. This slight release will probably also adjust to your capacity for your power and how much you’re using. It’ll be interesting to see once you learn to adjust your power output if the lightning disappears when you’re using 100% and increases the lower you go because that would indicate that your quirk can autoregulate in order to not harm your body. That would be so cool!”}

"Am I seeing things?"

{For the next hour, Toogata practiced spreading his quirk through his whole body until he could hold it for a full five minutes. He was sweating but smiling, and Izuku felt like he had a pretty good concept of Toogata's quirk now.

"You're quirk is so cool, Toogata!" Izuku said when they decided to call it a day, "It's almost like it's two separate quirks entirely!"}

"Wait, Wait, no."

{Toogata's eyes widened minutely and he laughed nervously, "I'm sure it's nothing *that* special, right?"

Izuku raised an eyebrow but brushed off Toogata's weird behavior when he didn't add anything.

"See you tomorrow, Deku!"

Izuku smiled and watched Toogata leave, "Yeah, see ya!"}

"Midoriya!?" Ashido cries.

"Hold your questions please." Headcase reminds, to the annoyance of practically everyone.

{Izuku couldn't sleep.

The more he thought about Toogata's quirk, the more it bugged him. According to everything he'd studied on quirk theory, it was theoretically possible to have an unrelated mutation appear later in life, but it was much more likely for a mutation to happen when the quirk first appeared in childhood. If Toogata's quirk did mutate at his age, it should have just been a more powerful version of permeation or something similar to it, not super strength. The more likely scenario was that someone in Toogata's family had a similar quirk and it just hid in his genes until now, but he'd said no one in his family had a strength quirk of any kind when Izuku had asked. So why had Toogata's quirk mutated in such a weird way?}

"He's not gonna be happy." Izuku mumbles earning himself even more suspicious glances.

{Izuku sighed and swung his feet out of bed. If he wasn't going to be able to sleep anyway, he might as well use the time to research

similar quirks and see if something like this had ever happened before. Even if he didn't find anything to satisfy his curiosity, he'd probably get some creative ideas on how to help Toogata.

The first half hour of searching didn't bring up anything too interesting. Most strength quirks functioned similarly to Death Arms's quirk, simply increasing strength and durability. They also all manifested in childhood, not as a mutation nearly a decade later. He was about to give up and try to go to sleep again when he noticed a promising article on a decades-old hero.

Nana Shimura was just beginning her hero career when her quirk underwent a rare mutation, increasing her strength and speed exponentially. This was odd enough on its own, but even more so when taking into account that her quirk, Float, had nothing to do with strength or speed.

Izuku looked deeper into Shimura, analyzing her quirk Float, which wasn't anything like Permeation, and trying to figure out how hers mutated because maybe that'd tell him something about how Toogata's did. He found an old photo and almost screamed when he saw a younger All Might in his skinny form draping an arm around her. He read the article and ran his hands through his hair.}

"All Might?" Aizawa warns.

{"Nana Shimura taught All Might."

Now that he thought about it, Toogata's quirk was eerily similar to All Might's and All Might seemed to be teaching him. It was probably that Nighteye reached after Toogata's quirk mutated the way it did because that would make sense.

But what if it wasn't.}

"This...this is impossible."

{Izuku almost didn't want to keep looking because he *had* to be wrong. What he was thinking just *couldn't be possible*. He numbly entered more search terms until he tracked down the hero who trained Nana Shimura.

"...manifested a strength aspect to his quirk in his second year at UA..."}

"This is real."

{No. It couldn’t be. *It wasn’t possible!* He looked at who had trained that hero.

“...took a three-year break from hero work when her quirk unexpectedly mutated.”}

"Fuck, shit, hell."

{If there had ever been any possibility that Izuku would get to sleep that night, it was long gone. He tracked the line of heroes and their mentors, each suddenly manifesting a strength quirk that inexplicitly got stronger with each hero mentored.

When he finally got to the dawn of quirks and the trail went cold, Izuku let out a deep exhale. As impossible as it seemed, as ridiculous as it sounded, he couldn’t deny it anymore.

There was a quirk that could be passed on.}

Silence filled the theater as people racked their brains around this new revelation. The quiet was only interrupted by Headcase summoning two chairs at the front of the room. She ushers both All Might and Midoriya to the front of the room. "Raise your hand if you have a question." The vast majority immediately do. "Let's begin."

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Let's Talk II

What will be asked? and who asks what?

Let's talk II

Chapter Summary

Interrogation

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Let's begin." Headcase says scanning the crowd for the first question "Aizawa, why don't you start us off?" she asks with a mischievous smile.

"I'll cut right to the chase then. When *exactly* did Midoriya receive this transferable quirk?" Aizawa glares at All Might.

"Uh, well you see..." He pauses reflecting on the unfortunate timing of the transfer.

Noticing his hesitation Midoriya takes the question nervously "The original plan was for me to get it about a month before the exam..."

"But?" Aizawa pushes.

"But I overworked myself so we had to push it back to the day of." He says very embarrassedly.

Aizawa goes to continue but is stopped by Headcase calling on someone else.

"Does that mean that you *first* used your quirk to save me from the zero pointers?" Uraraka asks in concern.

"Yep!" Izuku says proudly before his smile dropped as he added "It was a surprise when it broke my limbs though."

I'm sure All Might gave you excellent advice in using it, correct?" Iida asks.

"Uh..." Izuku hesitated as All Might lowered his head to his hands.

Aizawa notices right away and growls "What did you tell him?"

All Might sighs bracing himself for the inevitable "I told him to *clench his butt cheeks and yell 'smash'.*"

There was a moment of silence before nearly every teacher in the room replied. "You idiot!" "What were you thinking!?" "That's terrible advice!" "No wonder he just let loose!" Aizawa waited for the others to quiet down before he himself added "Why wasn't I, *his homeroom teacher*, told something about this?"

"This is a two-hundred-year-old secret the less who know, the better." All Might defended.

"Then tell me it had specific activation requirements or something, I could have *helped* him." Aizawa snaps back.

"Or sent him to General Studies and set him back even further." All Might pointed out.

"Only if he didn't put in the effort, which we both know he would have." Aizawa corrected.

"I'm his mentor, it's my job to guide him!" All Might raises his voice.

"Wonderful job with that, how many bones has he broken again?" Aizawa snarks.

"Enough!" Headcase interrupts "It doesn't matter what's been done only what will come to be, and he's going to need you both in the near future." They fall quiet, catching on to the entity's warning. They want to ask what she means but they know by now she doesn't do 'spoilers'. "Now any other questions?" She glances around noticing Shigiraki finally pulling himself out of his existential crisis.

"So you were really quirkless then?" Todoroki calls out

"Genetically speaking I still am." Izuku says with a deep breath.

"And All Might?" Todoroki turns to their teacher.

Before either of them could reply Headcase interrupts "That will be revealed in one of these stories so I'll have to ask you to wait for that answer." Todoroki nods his understanding while others anger and pout at the missing information.

Kirishima hesitantly asks "Did Bakugo really do all those things?"

"No. No, not even close. The worlds we're watching are so much worse. I don't have any childhood scars. I don't have a fully stocked first aid kit. And I've certainly never considered... What Viridian's going through. Kachan might be an ass, and yes might have been a bully but he was never the abuser those other ones have been."

Bakugo sits silently in his seat gripping his armrests tightly.

"So he never told you to kill yourself?" Monoma tactlessly sneers across the room. Both Bakugo and Midoriya tense, scanning the room already feeling judgment even if it isn't there.

Headcase steps between Izuku and the crowd starting down each person in turn "That is a private matter that neither boy will be pressured into talking about again. **Understood.**"

Before anyone can argue Dabi, who apparently couldn't care less, asks "So what is the damn thing even called?"

Jumping on the subject change Izuku answers "It's called One For All."

"And that's all you get for now." Headcase says cheerfully "The rest is in spoiler territory. Let's have one last question before we move on."

Everyone hesitates, not wanting to waste their last question before someone just blurts out "Who else knew before now!"

All Might takes the question in stride "Nedzu, Recovery Girl, Gran Torino, Tsukauchi, and Young Bakugo up till now."

"Why does Bakugo know?" Aizawa asks pinching the bridge of his nose.

"'Cause Deku very suddenly got a shit ton of power just a few months before All Might ran out of his." Bakugo deadpans because he is not an idiot.

"Right! That's all for now!" Headcase dismisses shooing everyone back to their seats as she sends the chairs away. She waits for the groups to settle before playing the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Enter Shigiraki

MM:SFH Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Enter Shigiraki

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

The League of Villains

{Izuku scribbled in his notebook as he watched the news. A few new heroes had debuted, but that wasn't what caught his attention. What *had* caught his attention was a group of reporters trying to interrogate a few UA staff members about All Might. It had been a short clip, probably only about 20 seconds, but it was clear that the cameraman had been *inside the gates*. The reporters didn't call any attention to it, but Izuku knew that UA didn't give out press passes, so *how did they get in?*}

"Me." Shigaraki smirks proudly.

{He was just considering hacking into the traffic cameras around there to satisfy his curiosity when his phone rang. *Giran.*

"Mom, I'll be in my room!"

"Ok, sweetie! Don't stay up all night!"

Izuku answered the call right as he closed his door, "So Giran, what have you got for me? Anything interesting?"

On the other end of the line, Giran chuckled, "I'll let you be the judge of that. Have you ever heard of the League of Villains?"

Izuku frowned slightly, "No, but they sound pretentious." He went to sit on the bed, "They must not be a very big group if I

haven't heard of them yet. How long have they been around?"}

"Just *wait*~" Toga singsongs.

{"Not very long." Giran said. "From what I understand, there are only two or three real members, but they're backed by the boogeyman of the underground, so I wouldn't underestimate them. They're planning something big and going through massive recruitment."

"I'm fine on my own, thanks." Izuku drawled, "Why would I tie myself down to an organization?"}

"That's a shame." Twice comments. *"We don't want you anyway!"*

{A chuckle came from the other end of the line, "Calm down, kid, you'd just be a consultant." He paused. "So, will you meet with them?"

"I don't know…" Izuku responded, "Have they even done anything yet, or am I supposed to just rely on some boogeyman's reputation?"

Giran paused for a long moment and Izuku could almost see him taking a long drag of his cigarette like he always did when he was thinking, "Well, Shigaraki told me they broke into UA earlier today? I don't know, the news didn't cover a break-in."

A slow grin spread across Izuku's face, "Because the media took advantage of them destroying the gate and most likely provided the perfect distraction for whatever the League wanted to do. The media didn't report it as a break-in because they'd be the ones blamed for it, so it'll go pretty much under the radar. Brilliant!"}

Shigaraki preens at the praise "The vultures made it too easy." He gloats as Dabi snorts at his antics.

{"So I can tell Shigiraki to expect you tonight?"

Izuku couldn't wipe the smile off his face, "If they want me to plan something as bold as breaking into UA? Definitely."}

"Revelry in the dark." Tokoyami rumbles.

"Agreed." Shoji replies.

{Izuku was surprised when he arrived at the address that Giran had texted him, only to find it was a bar. He shrugged. *Guess I get to check 'been to a bar' off my bucket list.* He was even more pleasantly surprised when he went inside to find it clean and tastefully decorated, a nice change from the derelict warehouses and docks he was used to meeting clients in. A bartender made of mist polished a glass behind the counter and Izuku's eyes narrowed in on the metal braces he wore around his neck. *Interesting, he must have a physical body that needs to be protected.* A scraggly-looking young man, probably only a few years older than Izuku was sitting on one of the bar stools, playing with a handheld game console, although Izuku wondered how he saw the screen with a severed hand clutching his face. At least he wouldn't have to deal with these villains discounting his planning skills on account of his age if one of their people was a teenager too.}

"Age doesn't equal experience." Gran nodded sagely.

{Izuku sauntered up to the counter, "Which of you is Shigaraki?"

There was no answer for a long moment before the teenager paused his game and set it down on the counter, "Had to reach a save point. I'm Shigaraki, Giran said you'd be interested in joining our party."

Izuku tilted his head, "That remains to be seen. I'm more of a solo player, to tell you the truth, but I understand teaming up to defeat big bosses."}

"And he's using gamer speak, they're going to get along swimmingly." Tsukauchi gripes.

{The hand on Shigaraki's face moved slightly and Izuku guessed the man was smiling, "Kurogiri, I like this one! And yes, Mastermind, we're gonna be taking down the biggest boss of them all! All Might!"}

"Fuck!"
"Shit!"
"Crap!"

{Izuku's eyes widened, "That's a pretty lofty quest for a relatively unknown party such as yourselves."

The look in Shigaraki's eyes was deranged, "But we can do it.

Sensei! Tell him about the Nomu!”

Izuku turned back to the mist bartender, expecting an explanation, but was met with only silence. Instead, a staticky voice came from the tiny tv set resting in the corner, “As you wish, Shigaraki. And may I simply say that it is a pleasure to see you here, Mastermind. I’ve heard many things about you.”}

"He's met All for One now, what they could do together..." All Might shivers unable to finish the thought.

{Izuku eyed the tv suspiciously, “All good, I hope. You must be the ‘boogeyman of the underground’ that Giran told me about if you won’t even show your face at this meeting.”

A chuckle cut through the static, “I suppose some have called me that, but you can call me All for One.”}

Those with the displeasure of having seen the man in person shiver at the mention of his name.

{Izuku nodded, the name sounded familiar, but he’d have to look it up later, “So, what’s this Nomu that Shigaraki mentioned.”

“The Nomu is a genetically engineered monster with multiple quirks, including strength, regeneration, and shock absorption. I created it to be on par with All Might’s strength.”}

"We'll have to see that beast in action multiple times while watching these stories." Momo stresses with worry.

"And we'll cheer them on to victory." Jiro assures firmly before adding tensely "Or at least to survival hopefully."

{Izuku hummed and sat down, “Interesting, but the problem with monsters is that they are hard to control.”

“The Nomu are practically braindead,” Shigaraki said gleefully, “And super obedient. This one will only obey orders from me and will do exactly what I tell it to!”

“And you believe it has the power to defeat All Might?”

Shigaraki smiled, “Of course! Sensei made it!”

Izuku frowned. Hero worship, even if it was for a villain, was dangerous. He made a mental note to not trust anything Shigaraki

said when it came down to All for One's abilities.}

"Hey!" Shigi says slightly insulted.

"No no he's right you can get seriously fucked up whenever someone criticizes your precious *Sensei*." Dabi starts off sounding comforting slowly becoming more mocking.

"Fuck off crispy bitch!" Shigaraki snaps, causing Dabi to laugh loudly.

{"Even in the event that it cannot kill All Might," Kurogiri spoke up for the first time, "It will most definitely weaken him."

"I suppose that's true…" Izuku said, "So what's the plan? Just throw the Nomu at All Might when he's on patrol, or does this have something to do with the break-in at UA?"

"Your intelligence stats are off the charts," Shigaraki said, "We broke in to get a class schedule. In a few days, All Might will be teaching a class in a building away from the rest of campus. That's where we'll kill him! Kurogiri will warp us right into the building when they least expect it. The muscle we've recruited will take care of the hero brats and other pros, and Nomu will take care of All Might!"}

"You know you kept the USJ event pretty tightly under wraps," Hawks starts turning to the faculty "how bad was it really?"

"It was a nightmare." Aizawa says simply.

"Well duh," Miruko snarks "but we need some details."

"And you'll get them," Headcase interrupts "when and if these stories tell you their version of events."

{Izuku nodded. His mind was buzzing. He'd never been obsessed with getting revenge on All Might for crushing his dreams, society had done more to do that than the number one pro, but he'd be lying if he said the idea of revenge didn't appeal to him. But there were too many unknowns in this plan for him to be entirely comfortable with it. What happened if the Nomu failed? How could they make sure All Might was weak when he fought it? What happened if All Might used all his time in the morning and never showed up to class? He began to sort out his thoughts, letting his brain come up with plans for every eventuality. After a few minutes of this, Izuku finally realized the others were staring

at him, most likely waiting for his answer.}

"I didn't expect the league to be this patient." Todoroki comments.

"It is likely due to Mastermind's own reputation that they behaving in such a manner." Iida posits.

"They did invite him, kero." Tsu agrees.

{“All right, sounds like a plan. However, I’d like to make a few changes, if that’s alright with you.”

Shigaraki looked to Kurogiri, who nodded. Shigaraki gestured for Izuku to continue.

“First, All Might has weaknesses that we can take full advantage of, one of which is that he has a time limit for how long he can be active each day. This is good for us, but could also potentially bite us in the ass if he does too much work in the morning and doesn’t show up to class.”}

All Might sinks into his seat noticing Aizawa and Nedzu both staring him down.

{“Hmm,” All for One said, “What do you suggest?”

“Well,” Izuku pulled out his notebook, “Both of us have significant pull in the underground. Between the two of us, I’m sure we can manipulate the city so that All Might has to interfere in about two hours' worth of crimes, but no more than that. Last I heard, All Might’s limit was around three hours, so if we keep him occupied for two of them, he’ll be as weak as we can get him while still ensuring he shows up to class. From there, we’ll need to split up the hero students and get them away from the entrance. It’s important that none of them escape to get help from other heroes. We’ll also need some way to jam communications so no one can call for help.”}

"They already got someone for that." Kaminari winces remembering his own USJ experience.

{“That’s already taken care of,” Kurogiri said calmly, “One of the villains we recruited has an electric-type quirk perfect for jamming signals.”

Izuku wrote down what they had so far, “Do you know the

students' quirks? It'll be better if we know what to look for."

Shigaraki shook his head, "They're just brats, they can't do much damage."

Izuku wasn't so sure. If all the students were as strong as Katsuki, they could do a lot of damage indeed. He looked at Shigaraki coldly, "People would probably say the same about you and me. Age isn't a measure of competence." He bit his pencil, "Unfortunately, the staff is probably already on guard after today's break-in, and hacking into the records now would tip our hand. It's not ideal, but we'll just have to split them up as soon as we arrive."}

"Thank goodness." Midnight sighs, the others sharing the sentiment. They've gone over that day in their minds so many times imagining how much worse it could have gone if the villains had the forethought to plan for each student's quirk.

{The four spent the next few hours debating different plans and making sure that everything would go smoothly. By the time Izuku went back home, he was almost too excited to sleep. He looked at his bare walls and the still visible outlines of where posters had been and smiled brightly. Watch out, All Might, Mastermind is coming.}

"Okay, okay, so..." Izuku starts "when we come back to Mastermind *everyone* gets their own box of tissues." He continues with deep breaths and a shaking voice. Some may hesitate but no one refuses or disagrees. Headcase lets the crowd calm themselves for some time before starting the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: The Notebook

V:TGG Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

The Notebook

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Analysis

{Izuku hesitated before grabbing a marble out of the pouch on his belt. Why couldn't Amplifier be closer? Or even Rock Lock? He could have dealt with that. But why did it have to be Eraserhead? Izuku instinctively looked back even though the mugging he'd come across was a few streets away. Maybe he'd be able to handle it on his own...he could just go back, but there were five big guys and the victim didn't look like he'd be able to run away fast enough if Izuku were to die, which was likely considering he was still injured from his fight last night.}

"Just take me with you." Aizawa groans.

{Izuku groaned in frustration, then threw the marble, which bounced off Eraserhead's back. Izuku's jaw dropped at his reflexes as Eraser whipped around and immediately grabbed the marble out of the air before it could hit the ground. He looked at it for a second in confusion before looking around. Izuku winced as he saw the ugly bruise spreading across Eraser's nose. He was such a bad person.}

"Dang Sho, the kid got you good." Mic says hissing at the injury.

"I noticed." Eraser deadpans back to him.

{He froze as Eraser's eyes zeroed in on him, but his expression

was strange. Eraser should be really angry and Izuku had been expecting a scowl like Kacchan had when Izuku annoyed him, but instead, Eraser looked...relieved? It must just be because Izuku couldn't see his eyes, or he was just terrible at reading facial expressions because there was no way that someone would be *relieved* to see the person who punched them in the nose! Eraser must just be hiding his anger.}

"You were injured and he's a hero it's only logical for him to have been worried." Shinsou snarks.

{Izuku smiled apologetically and started running. This was so embarrassing! Eraser probably wanted nothing to do with him and yet here he was asking for help from someone who he'd hurt. He didn't deserve Eraser's help. He'd just have to stick around and help with the fight so Eraser didn't have to work as hard! He couldn't just punch him in the face, then expect him to do all the work.}

"No Problem Child, leave it to me." Aizawa sighs.

"Wishful thinking." Mic chuckles.

"Yup." Midnight giggles.

{When they reached the mugging, Izuku ran right in, Eraserhead close behind him. The thugs were big, and at least two of them seemed to have minor strength enhancement quirks, so Izuku should try to handle the others first. He rushed toward a skinny guy who was manifesting short blades from his skin. He would probably get cut a few times, but it was better he got hurt than Eraserhead. He probably deserved some extra pain after what he'd done.}

"Hey isn't that the guy from Kiri's debut?" Kaminari asks.

"Yeah, it is," Kirishima comes to a horrible realization "he must have gotten away with this mugging in our world."

{Suddenly, the blades disappeared and Izuku glanced behind him to see Eraser glaring at *his* villain, "Viridian! You have a slingshot for a reason! Don't just run in recklessly!"

Izuku's eyes widened. He was right, he'd bought his slingshot so he didn't have to get close to villains if he didn't have to. And Eraserhead had to cancel the knife villain's quirk to remind him

of that, which meant that he wasn't able to worry about the others, which meant that Izuku had messed everything up again. Nice going, Deku. He quickly got out of the knife quirk user's range and jumped on top of the dumpster so he had a good view of the fight, then got out his slingshot and a handful of marbles.}

"Yes child, listen to the grouch, despite his temperament he does know what he's doing." Recovery Girl comments

{He started pelting all five thugs with as many marbles as he could without hitting Eraserhead. Mostly he just distracted the villains long enough for Eraserhead to get a hit in, which honestly worked pretty well. It had only been a few minutes and Eraser had already managed to put two thugs out of commission! He was so cool!}

"Yep!"
"Agreed!"
"We know!"
"He's the best!"
"That's an understatement!" Eraser is *not* blushing and you can't prove any differently.

{Eraserhead was focused on fighting the two strength quirk villains and Izuku was focused on creating an opening for Eraser, so neither of them noticed one of the thugs literally melt into the shadows and make his way to the dumpster Izuku was standing on. Izuku screamed and almost lost his balance when a creepy smile suddenly popped into existence in front of him, but before he could fall, the shadow villain grabbed his arm and flipped Izuku over his shoulder, slamming him hard onto the concrete.}

"Ooooo."
"Ouch."
Hiss
"Damn."

{Izuku grit his teeth as he forced himself to roll to his feet like Eraser had taught him and grabbed his pipes. He lowered himself into a battle stance as he tried to keep his eye on the villain, but he simply melted into the shadows again, then popped up behind Izuku and kicked him in the back. This fight *really* wasn't good for his still-bruised ribs.}

"Come on Viridian you got this!" Kaminari cheers in support, the

others slowly but surely joining him.

{Izuku ran through what he knew about the guy's quirk. Ok, so he could blend in with shadows. Was he using it as a disguise to make himself invisible, or was he actually changing the shape of his body? Maybe he was using it to teleport? As the villain started to disappear again, Izuku ran forward and grabbed at the air. There! The villain was still there, he simply became invisible in darkness!}

"Nice catch!"
"Great job!"
"Kick his ass!"

{Izuku grinned and closed his eyes. If he couldn't rely on his sense of sight, he'd just have to use his other senses. Kacchan's explosions could get bright enough to temporarily blind someone and he'd gone through a phase in elementary school where his favorite past-time was to blind Izuku during recess, then have his lackeys attack him while he couldn't see. Izuku had had to learn to dodge based only on sound and movement and eventually he'd gotten good enough at it that Kacchan decided the game was too boring and he'd stopped. Izuku just hoped he wasn't too out of practice.}

"Excuse the fuck outta me!?" Bakugo shouts "Did I actually do that!?"

"I..." Midoriya goes on to answer "don't remember it?"

"You said that like a question!"

"There was a lot of bullshit, but I think I'd remember something like that."

Bakugo growls in frustration but sits down anyway. The rest of the theater collectively decided to just let them have their *discussions* without interference.

{Izuku took a deep breath. He could hear Eraser fighting those other two villains a little farther away, but let that fade into the background. He only needed to worry about the sounds closest to him. There was a footstep off to his left and a slight breeze by his shoulder, so Izuku leaned right and felt the punch fly past him. Ok, he could do this. There were a few more steps, then a change in air pressure on his other side, so he dodged again. The next punch came quicker since the villain was probably trying to be

unpredictable, but Izuku ducked so that the punch only knocked his hood off rather than breaking his nose.}

"That's so cool!"
"Badass!"
"Fucking epic!"

{The next punch was on his left again, but it was eerily similar to Kacchan's right hook, so Izuku was ready! He grabbed the man's arm and yanked as hard as he could, imitating the way Amplifier moved her feet when she judo-flipped villains. He opened his eyes to see the guy lying dazed on the ground, so Izuku hurried to flip him over onto his stomach and zip-tie his hands behind him before he could disappear again. He'd done it! He'd taken him down!}

Clapping and cheers fill the room at Viridian's success, proud grins plastered on his friends' and teachers' faces.

{Shouta was freaking out. He'd heard Viridian scream a few minutes ago, but he couldn't afford to take his eyes off the two villains he was fighting. He just had to hope the kid would be alright. Viridian had been doing this for two months now, he knew enough not to die. It was just a question about whether he would actually use what he knew. Damn, problem child.}

"Won't he be surprised." Midnight teases.

{But for right now, Shouta had his own problems to worry about. These two couldn't do too much in the short time that it took to blink, but he still needed to end this quickly. He used his capture weapon to grab one and toss him into the other, but that one was sturdy enough that he just grunted, then threw another punch. Shouta jumped into the air to dodge and flipped to land behind the guy without ever taking his eyes off him, a trick he'd perfected in high school. He managed to kick him in the kidneys, but by that time, the first one was back on his feet and swinging for Shouta's face too fast for him to dodge.}

"Okay that was fucking impressive." Dabi says unusually honestly.

{Shouta flinched, but before the hit could land, the villain was hit on the side of the head with a soup can and went down. Shouta glanced back to see Viridian standing there with that same half-determined, half-terrified expression he'd had during their last fight together, having obviously just thrown the can. In the split

second Shouta watched, Viridian grabbed his slingshot, which had somehow ended up on the ground, and drew it back.}

"Can you imagine *'So how did you get arrested?'* and their answer is '**I was taken down by a soup can**'." Toga snickered the boys joining her in amusement.

{“Duck!”

Shouta didn’t hesitate to comply and a second later, a marble shot over his head and he heard the final villain swear. He turned and shot his capture weapon out in one fluid movement, catching the still-swearing villain by surprise. He wrapped the weapon around the man’s ankle and launched him into the wall, then grabbed him by the hair and hit his head against the wall to knock him out. When that was done, Shouta looked around frantically to make sure Viridian was alright, only to find him already comforting the victim.}

"Dad mode has been triggered." Hagakure giggles.

{Shouta looked around the alley and took stock of the situation. In addition to a zip-tied villain that Viridian must have taken down, the floor was littered with marbles, and...was that Viridian’s notebook? Shouta glanced over at Viridian, who was now making sure the victim called the police. It must have fallen out of the problem child’s pocket sometime during the fight.}

"Don't you go snooping." Mic scolds at the same time Midnight cheers "Tell us what it says!" earning her a betrayed look from the loud blond.

{He picked the notebook up and, against his better judgment, started leafing through it. So he was curious, sue him. There were diagrams notating different fighting styles along with what heroes used them and Shouta smiled fondly when he realized that the kid had been trying to imitate some of his moves as well. He kept reading and was pleased to find that the kid had started focusing on villain analysis recently.}

"Aw, sensei looks so proud." Uraraka coos.

"Only because nobody's looking, kero." Tsu smirks playfully.

{He didn’t recognize most of the villains Viridian had written about, so he didn’t bother to read carefully, but there was one

entry about a villain Amplifier arrested a week or so ago that caught his eye. She'd been complaining about how hard it was because the guy's quirk let him see through solid objects, a skill he'd been using to peek inside women's restrooms in the bars he visited. He'd managed to hide from her for a good while because he'd just hide behind something so she couldn't see him, but he'd always been able to see her coming. Eventually, Viridian had apparently led her to him, but the whole chase had lasted several hours.}

"I remember that guy," Amplifier complained "I never did catch up to him, had to turn it over to some daylight asshole that wouldn't stop gloating."

{Viridian's notes were mostly stream of consciousness, and his handwriting got messier the faster he wrote, so it took a few moments for Shouta to get used to the style and figure out what the notes said, but when he did...whoa.

Guy seems to be an emitter type. Always runs away moments before Amplifier finds him like he already knows she's coming. Some type of premonition quirk? Probably not, those are super rare and highly regulated, if someone like that were a villain, the government would know and warn the public, that's what they've done before when it's happened. So other possibilities? Maybe he sees her coming? Some remote vision quirk? How did he get caught in a chase then? Limit? He doesn't seem to run until she's right around the corner, so x-ray vision? Then...there must be objects he can't see through...lead? Impractical. But if he's looking through objects, then he won't think to look up!

Thinking back, Amplifier had said she was surprised because Viridian led her over the rooftops to find the peeping tom. Had he done that specifically to counteract the man's quirk? He'd managed to figure out the villain's quirk and how to work around it just from watching what he did, without knowing anything about him beforehand. That was amazing!}

Awe spreads through the theater at seeing their resident analyst in action.

{Shouta went back and started reading some of the other analyses more carefully. If he'd thought that the peeping tom analysis was the exception to the rule, he'd been wrong. Every analysis showed similar depth and thought, and could easily rival a professional

analyst's skill, even if Viridian's weren't as polished. Shouta had been assuming that Viridian had a mild speed quirk, but from what he'd read so far, an analysis quirk was more likely, and a powerful one at that. This kid…}

"So the top theories are speed or analysis." Izuku muses finding more enjoyment than he expected from the theories.

{"Eraserhead, sir?"

Shouta looked up to see Viridian staring at the notebook in his hands. Well, he may as well let the kid know what he thought, since he'd already been caught, "These analyses are pretty impressive, kid."

To his surprise, rather than accepting the praise, Viridian shook his head, "No they're not. I just write things down so I don't forget them, it's not like I'm writing anything special."}

"Yes it is!"
"It's amazing!"
"You're so smart!"

{Shouta's eyebrows shot up, "You don't think this is anything special? Kid, you figure out people's quirks and how to beat them within minutes."

Viridian shook his head again, "Anyone can do that, they're just smart enough that they don't have to write it down to remember it. I'm not smart like them."

Shouta frowned. From what he'd read, the kid was probably a genius, so he must be joking when he said he wasn't smart. Unless...but Viridian's self-esteem couldn't be that bad, could it?}

"Unfortunately it is that bad." Aizawa says solemnly.

{"Don't kid yourself, problem child," he held up the book, "I wish my students were half this smart."

Viridian fidgeted for a moment before suddenly snatching the notebook out of Shouta's hands and running off. Shouta groaned and considered chasing after him, but some of the villains were already starting to wake up and the police would be arriving any moment. Damn, problem child.}

"Someone give that boy a hug!" Hagakure demands.

{Izuku was already a few blocks away by the time he stopped to catch his breath. He'd have to be more careful with his notebook, that was so embarrassing! Eraser had to lie and call him smart just to be polite even though he'd probably been creeped out by Izuku's stupid ramblings just like his classmates were. Because there was obviously no way he *actually* believed Izuku was smart, right? But...Eraserhead also didn't really care about politeness and social norms, so he wouldn't lie just to be polite, so...but he also hadn't seemed as angry as Izuku expected considering that he had a bruise from when…

"Dang it!" Izuku muttered. "I forgot to apologize!"}

Aborted laughter and suppressed amusement fill the room as the screen fades out and the next chapter begins to load.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: I understand the assignment

CC:SS Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

I understand the assignment

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

People

{Izuku grabbed his bag and bolted as soon as he heard the bell. A small part of him knew that his classmates might not reject him right off the bat, this was UA after all, but the larger part of him knew that wasn't very likely. These kids were still human, which meant that they would still see him as weak and defenseless now that they knew he didn't have a quirk, just like Katsuki had.}

"Damnit Izu-kun!" Mei scolds.

{He hadn't even noticed Mei chasing after him until she grabbed him by his arm and spun him around to face her, "Izuku Hacker Midoriya, just what do you think you're doing?"

"Breaking out the middle name? This must be serious." Izuku chuckled nervously. "You do realize I might have a real middle name, right?"}

"I don't but still." Izuku chuckles earning a slap to his arm.

{"It's too late to change it now, Izu-Kun, your middle name is Hacker." Mei dismissed. "Now, why'd you run away like that?"

"Why do you think?" Izuku couldn't help snapping but then forced himself to take a deep breath. He wasn't used to letting himself feel frustrated about things like this, but that still wasn't any reason to take things out on Mei. "I...I'm sorry, Mei-chan, but

believe me, it's better if I can just avoid...everything that was about to happen. People don't tend to react *kindly* when they learn I'm quirkless."}

"Either you're made of glass or diseased trash that shouldn't exist." Izuku growled, relieved that he can express his issues freely with his friends.

{"You have to give people a chance to be good, Izu-Kun!" Mei stomped her foot. "You can't just run away because you assume people are going to hate you! What if I hadn't forced you to listen after you told me? Would you have run away then too?"

"Yes!" Izuku was only able to hold himself back from yelling because he remembered they were still in the hallway. "Look, you're the exception. All my life, the second anyone has learned that I was less evolved, they've turned on me. Everyone. Even my own mother started seeing me differently. I'm *tired*, Mei-chan. I don't…Ugh! I just didn't think I wanted to deal with that today, ok?"}

"Pity is so much worse than hatred." Midoriya grumbles.

"I get that." Uraraka nods "It's like whenever I bring up my family's money troubles I have to ask myself "are they going to assume they have to pay for everything?","

"I have the Number 1 hero's credit card and will do anything to spite him." Todoroki deadpans.

"...or are they going to come up with stupid dares and bets for me to 'earn my keep'?" She finishes.

"That's horrid!" Iida exclaims.

"Is that why getting you to *let us* pay for anything for you is like pulling teeth, kero?" Tsu asks concerned.

"Yeah." she replies embarrassed.

{Mei looked as shocked as Izuku felt at his outburst. He hadn't really realized that all that was bubbling under the surface when he ran away from his classmates. He'd just thought he was...scared? He didn't know, but now that he was thinking about it, he realized that his frustrated self was probably more honest than he was used to being with himself. He *was* tired. Sick and

tired of the constant betrayal that came with people abandoning him. He didn't want to do it anymore.}

"Abandonment issues: noted." Hound dog mumbled as he added to his notes.

{"Izuku…" Mei's expression shifted from something almost like pity to a determined glare and he had to take a step back as she grabbed his arm and started dragging him back toward the classroom. "No. I'm not gonna let my best friend run away from potential allies just because he's scared of a little rejection! Any good inventor knows that you can't let a few explosions drive you from the lab!"}

"Aggressive friendship for the win!" Ashido cheers.

{"I'm not an inventor!" Izuku dug his heels in and tried to yank his arm back, but Mei had years worth of muscle from hauling around tools and materials, so all he did was slow her down. "I'm an analyst. I use past data to make predictions! And all my data is pointing to this *not* being a good idea!"}

"A suitable argument." Nedzu comments.

{"Your data set is skewed." Mei countered. "Now get back there and make friends!"}

"You tell him Mei!" Uraraka shouts her support.

{"No!"

They were so busy with their modified game of tug-of-war that neither of them noticed Nedzu hanging upside-down from the ceiling until they were right in front of him, "Hello!"

Izuku yelped and Mei stumbled backward. Without her actively pulling against him, Izuku's own momentum was too much and he fell to the floor, pulling Mei down on top of him. His face grew hot as he realized that not only had the principal of UA, and supposedly his new personal mentor, caught him in the middle of a childish fight, but then Izuku had to make things worse by literally tripping over his own feet. Couldn't he catch a break?}

Laugh
Snort
Chuckle

Cackle
"Holy shit!"
"Ha!"
"*Smooth*!"

{“Oh dear!” Nedzu smiled pleasantly. “Well, this seems to be quite the predicament!”}

"Oh, don't even." Mic complains.

"We know you do that sorta thing on purpose!" Midnight adds.

"Why, whatever do you mean?" Nedzu asks with a menacing smile.

{Mei didn’t waste any time untangling herself from Izuku, who groaned as she accidentally slapped him in her haste to get to her feet. Well, it was *probably* accidental, but really, who knew when it came to her? Either way, within seconds she had scrambled to her feet and started shaking Nedzu’s paw enthusiastically.

“I’m Mei Hatsume, future CEO of Hatsume Industries!” She grinned. “And you’re Principal Nedzu.”}

"Your lack of fear is astonishing." Iida tells Mei.

"I know right!" Mei laughs.

{Izuku hid his face in his hands, silently screaming in embarrassment, but Nedzu didn’t seem phased by Mei’s behavior at all as he simply chuckled, “That I am! And I know who you are, Miss Hatsume. I saw your entry for the entrance exam and I must say that I am very excited to see what you’ll do here at UA. Do you mind if I steal young Midoriya from you for a moment? I’ll return him by tomorrow.”}

"And suddenly I'm no longer a part of negotiations." Izuku sighs causing his friends to chuckle.

{Before Izuku could protest being referred to as an object, Mei grinned, “Of course!”

She grabbed his arm and yanked him roughly to his feet. Nedzu was no help and simply grinned knowingly as Izuku was manhandled by his best friend. Mei shoved him forward, effectively handing him off to the principal, “See if you can get him to stop being an idiot while you’re at it!”}

"Hey!" Izuku yells indignantly as the audience chuckles at his misfortune.

{Nedzu laughed, “I will do my best Miss Hatsume!”

“You’ll have your work cut out for you. He’s too stubborn for his own good.” She turned on her heel and waved as she started walking away, “Good luck, Izu-Kun! See you tomorrow!”

Izuku gulped and turned back to the principal, “Um…hi?”

Nedzu simply smiled, seemingly unbothered by his awkwardness as he started leading Izuku down the hall, “Hello! How was your first day? Did everything go well?”

Izuku nodded, pushing the whole situation with his *quirk introduction* out of his mind, “It was really good. I, uh, heard that you had a hand in setting up my workstation, so…thank you?”}

"That shouldn't be a question." Ojirou sighs.

"He's probably still overwhelmed." Sato reasons.

{“Oh!” Nedzu’s smile grew a little more excited. “Was everything to your liking? The moment I saw your request form, I thought, *this simply won’t do at all!* You can’t learn without the right materials, after all!”

“It just seems like a little much.” Izuku said softly. “You really didn’t need to go to so much trouble for me, I’m sorry.”

Nedzu waved his paw dismissively, “Not at all! In fact, it was rather fun, so you were doing me a favor.”

Izuku hadn’t thought of it that way, but he supposed that Powerloader *had* said that Nedzu had enjoyed setting up his little room, “Oh, then you’re welcome, I guess.”}

"Sometimes I forget how adorable Midoriya can be and then he does stuff like this." Hagakure coos.

{They had arrived at a door that Izuku recognized from his entrance exam as the principal’s office. Nedzu opened the door and gestured for Izuku to go in, “Tea?”

“Y-yes, please…”

Nedzu grabbed a kettle from the side table and poured hot water into two cups, putting the tea bags in before setting them on the desk and inviting Izuku to sit down, “Now, I’m sure you’re eager to get home, and you’re most likely wondering what this is all about, correct?”

Izuku nodded hesitantly, “Just a little, though I’m pretty sure you wanted to talk about my analysis lessons, right? Powerloader said something about me being your personal student, so…”

“That is partially correct!” Nedzu took a sip of tea. “I do want to talk to you about that. However, there is something else. Powerloader mentioned that the support students work on projects over the course of the semester, correct?”}

"Oh, oh, what do I get to do?" Izuku bounces in his seat.

{“He said something about that in my acceptance letter.” Izuku confirmed. “But he hasn’t said anything else about it.”

“Ah, well Midoriya, each first-year support student chooses a project to work on every semester and most of your grade is based on your adequate completion of it. Most students in your class will be working on an invention, but I have something a little different in mind for you if you find it agreeable.”}

"Just get on with it already." Shigiraki whines.

{Izuku nodded and took a sip of his tea as he waited for Nedzu to continue. Was he supposed to say something? But he didn’t want to interrupt the principal of UA! Thankfully, Nedzu took his nod as answer enough and continued talking before Izuku could work himself into a full anxiety attack wondering how he was supposed to act around such a smart and important person. Well, not *person,* but...authority figure? Izuku hadn’t really had many positive experiences with those.}

"You will now." Koda comments in understanding.

{“I would like you to make a full analysis of the first-year hero students’ quirks.” Nedzu said. “They are still young and lack training, so they have a lot of room for improvement. You should focus your analysis on how they can play to their strengths while hopefully minimizing their weaknesses. These will be given to the students for them to use, so you’ll be able to see the difference your skills can really make. Is that acceptable?”}

"That's so cool!"
"We get analysis!"
"We're gonna get so much better!"

{“Yes!” Izuku sunk back in his chair sheepishly, “Um, I mean, yes, that sounds like it will be a good project.”

“It’s not bad to be excited.” Nedzu chuckled, making Izuku blush. “In fact, that enthusiasm is probably a large part of why your analysis is so advanced at such a young age. I wouldn’t have chosen this project if I didn’t believe that you would enjoy it.”}

"And I will!" Izuku celebrates "So much!"

{“Thank you.” Izuku wrung his hands together anxiously, “But, um, I don’t think my analysis is really that advanced yet. I still have a long way to go.”}

"Mind-chan would beg to differ." Toga pouted.

{“But of course!” Nedzu smiled. “This *is* a school, after all. But that brings me to the next part of our chat. You do realize, of course, that as an analyst, you will often have access to sensitive information, whether this is given to you so that you can do your job or whether it is something like a hero’s weaknesses that you figured out yourself, correct?”

Izuku nodded, wondering where he was going with this.

“Well, I was planning on giving you full access to the school’s camera system so you can easily observe the first years wherever they happen to be.” Nedzu said. “But, if you are observing correctly, you might become privy to certain...circumstances, when it comes to one of our faculty. This information cannot be allowed to get out, you understand.”}

"Oooooh, He's gonna tell him about Small Might." Izuku realizes.

Iida whips around to him "*Small Might?*"

Izuku looks at him with all the seriousness he can muster "Do *not* tell him I said that."

The girls all laugh at that while Todoroki suppresses a smile and Iida promises to keep it to himself.

{Izuku nodded anxiously. Was he really being entrusted with big secrets on his first day? What if he somehow messed it up? What if he accidentally posted something that exposed the secret and then the staff would hate him and he'd get kicked out of UA and blacklisted from all the other schools and…

A knock on the door startled Izuku out of his spiraling thought. Nedzu jumped down from his chair to open the door, "And here he is now! Welcome, All Might! Come inside!"

Izuku practically deflated in relief as he saw All Might in his skinny form hesitantly walk in the door, "Oh, you were just talking about All Might's other form! I already knew about that, so you don't have anything to worry about."}

Snort "Yeah kid, because just randomly knowing the number 1 hero's greatest secret is no big deal." Dabi snarks.

{Nedzu grinned manically and All Might did a double take and spit up a few drops of blood as he saw Izuku sitting at the desk, "Uh, Nedzu...that's a student."}

"You don't say." Midnight teases.

{"Yes, that's Izuku Midoriya, my personal student." Nedzu said, almost proudly, if that was even possible. "I thought it would be best to tell him about your injury before he saw you change forms on the cameras, but it seems I had nothing to worry about."

"But...uh…" All Might opened and closed his mouth nervously a few times, "...how?!"}

"YOU FORGOT!?" Bakugo screeches at the screen.

{"You…" Izuku's stomach dropped slightly, "You don't remember me?"

All Might looked between Izuku and Nedzu, confused, and a wave of disappointment washed over him. He didn't know why he expected All Might to remember him, but for some reason, he'd assumed he would. That short conversation had completely derailed his life and knocked him forcefully onto a new path, so it just seemed so important to Izuku, but to All Might, it was just another conversation with a fan. Of course, he didn't remember every fan he'd talked to! Remembering one person would be completely unreasonable!}

"I mean, I guess."
"I suppose that makes sense."
"Doesn't make it better."
"Still sucks."

{Izuku forced a smile onto his face, burying his disappointment in logic, “It was almost a year ago, so it’s ok that you don’t remember! I, uh, asked you if I could be a hero and you encouraged me to choose a more realistic path.” He chuckled awkwardly. “I did! I, uh, still want to help people, but decided it would be safer if I did that from behind a computer, you know?”}

"You're too nice Deku." Uraraka huffs.

"I don't like grudges," he replies then shivers while adding "just look what it's doing to Mastermind."

{“Oh…” All Might still looked confused, but after a moment, there was a flash of recognition, “You were that quirkless boy.”

Izuku smiled and shrugged, “I’m going to be an analyst. If you’d never saved my life that day and taken the time to talk to me, I would probably still be chasing an impossible dream. I’m a lot happier now, though, so, uh, thank you.”}

"I don't know how to feel about this." Shoji comments.

"The saccharin sentiment of his new dream is weighted by the rot of the path not taken." Tokoyami agrees.

{All Might shuffled awkwardly, glancing to Nedzu, who was watching the scene with an unreadable expression, “I’m, uh, glad I could help.”

Izuku nodded and turned back to Nedzu, “Well, I’ve known for a while now and haven’t told anyone yet, so was that all you wanted to talk to me about.”

“For now.” Nedzu confirmed. “Anything else can wait. Now, shouldn’t you be getting home?”

“Yes!” Izuku bowed to them and grabbed his backpack before running to the door. “Thanks!”

All Might hesitantly started edging for the door as well, “I, uh, should probably be heading out as well…”

Izuku was already on his way out, but he could've sworn there was a slight chill in Nedzu's voice as he closed the door, "Actually, All Might, why don't you stay for a cup of tea? I believe we need to have a little chat."}

"F in the chat for All Might." Kaminari calls out.

"F." Ashido and Sero reply.

"RIP." Kirishima adds solemnly.

"F." Uraraka continues.

"F, kero." Tsu agrees.

"He will be missed." Aoyama sighs.

"A once great man." Shoji comments.

"Indeed." Tokoyami agrees.

"So sad." Dark Shadow snickers.

"These kids." Dabi chuckles.

"Have teenagers always been this savage?" Shigaraki asks.

"Yup!" Toga cheers proudly.

"Okay, okay." Headcase calls to order "Before you head to bed, fair warning I've been able to prepare the new story sooner than expected so it will be added to the next rotation."

Excitement and dread fill the room as Izuku asks "What's it called?"

Headcase is quick to respond "Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes, now off to bed with you all."

After a nice dinner, a great night's sleep, and a filling breakfast everyone settled into their seats, now armed with personalized tissues, ready to continue.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Existential crisis

And that’s day 3

D?ITHSP... Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Existential crisis

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Quirkless

{Something was different about Deku.

Mirio watched as Deku looked through case files with almost robotic precision and gave a few ideas for quirk improvement to him and Sir's sidekicks, but the quiet muttering and the bright smiles he'd come to associate with Deku were nowhere to be found. He also kept looking at Mirio oddly. Sometimes it was like he was sad? At other moments, it was almost as if he was angry? But then the looks were gone and Deku was back to being almost normal, except quieter. Mirio couldn't figure it out. Maybe Deku had a bad dream last night? Or maybe he just didn't sleep well? Whatever it was, it had to have been big, but at the same time... how big could it have been if he hadn't even left the agency?}

"Oh you poor fool." Mirio whispers in sympathy.

"If other you figures out what happened do you think he'll...you'll...he'll feel guilty." Amajiki worries.

"Maybe." Mirio considers.

{Mirio thought for a moment. He should probably ask him or something, right? All Might was always telling him how important a smile was to being the next symbol of peace. He said that taking care of people's spirits was just as important as taking

care of their bodies, so...Mirio looked at Deku for a minute before walking up to him and clapping him on the back.

“Hey Deku, why so glum?”

Deku jumped in surprise and looked at him nervously, “Sorry, I was lost in thought. What did you say again?”

“I was just noticing you’re a bit off today.” Mirio explained sheepishly. “Did something happen?”

Deku’s eyes widened slightly before he forced a wobbly smile onto his face, “I just didn’t get much sleep last night is all.”}

"Yep, that's it, don't know your greatest secret at all." Dabi drawls sarcastically.

{“Nightmares?”

“Research.” Deku said, “Speaking of, I’ve got some cases I wanted to go over again. I’ll see you later!”

Mirio watched in confusion as Deku practically ran down the hall.

Well, that was weird.}

"I feel so bad, it's not Mirio-senpai's fault I'm acting like that." Izuku whines with guilt.

"It'll be okay." Uraraka comforts.

"You always figure it out eventually, kero." Tsu agrees.

{Izuku felt bad for avoiding Toogata, but he couldn’t help it! Every time he looked at him, all he could think was that Toogata had been born with an amazing quirk that would make him a wonderful hero and then decided that wasn’t good enough and was literally given another. All the while Izuku, who had been wanting to be a hero his entire life, had to deal with everyone telling him he was worthless and incapable of being a hero simply because he didn’t have a quirk.}

"Yeah that might make someone a bit bitter." Sero considers.

"I'm both *dreading* and cannot wait for the first day of school." Ashido comments.

"I'm just annoyed by what I *know* is going to happen." Bakugo gripes.

"If it's anything like our own first day..." Kirishima winces.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." Kaminari dismisses for now.

{He took a deep breath as he closed the door to his borrowed room. Why did Toogata get to have two quirks? In what way was that fair? Izuku thought back to that day on the rooftop when he asked All Might if he could be a hero too and had to quash down his anger before he screamed. All Might *knew* that there was a quirk that could be passed on, but still told a little boy that his dream of being a hero was absolutely impossible.}

"I hope you know how much you screwed up." Aizawa growls.

"I do now." All Might sighs.

{Izuku didn't blame him for being reluctant to pass his quirk to a quirkless kid he'd just met, but did he have to give his quirk to someone who already had one? Why couldn't All Might have gone around talking with groups of quirkless kids and picked his successor that way? He could have seen which ones had heroic potential, which ones would be grateful for the opportunity he was giving them, and which would make good use of his amazing quirk. He even had his skinny form so no one would know that All Might was even looking for a successor!}

"That's not a bad idea." Torino muses.

{But instead, All Might had taken one look at Toogata, who was already one of the best students at UA, and decided to make him even *more* powerful. It just wasn't fair! Izuku ran his hands through his hair, wincing when his fingers caught on the tangles. He knew he wasn't being fair to Toogata. With how highly Nighteye thought of him, it was entirely possible it was *Nighteye* who reached out to All Might and suggested Toogata as a potential successor. It probably wasn't like Toogata *asked* to receive All Might's quirk. Izuku didn't know if he wished Toogata had rejected it or not. On the one hand, it would have been better to give someone quirkless that opportunity, but on the other, who could reject an offer like that from the number one hero himself?}

"That's a good point; what kid is going to refuse something like that?" Midnight says worried.

"I would hope I'd catch on to that kind of hesitance and ensure they *actually* wanted this." Yagi comments in concern.

"Are you saying you wouldn't be surprised by a refusal? And by extension overlook any trepidation a child might exhibit?" Nedzu offers.

"Well, you may have a point there." Toshinori concedes before a soft smile spreads about across his face "Though I can confidently say that Young Midoriya's only reservations regarding One For All were, and sometimes still are, related to the insecurities surrounding his previous quirk status."

"Which we *all* will be able to assist you with." Hound Dog declares, the rest of the staff eagerly agreeing.

{Izuku sighed and got out his laptop. He was tired, angry, and frustrated, but all of that was drowned out by the self-pity that he felt as he compared himself, the scrawny kid doomed to misery the moment he was born with two toe joints, to Toogata, the lucky hero with two amazing quirks. Could Izuku even be worth anything if he didn't even have one quirk?}

"He's spiraling!" Hagakure cries.

"Quick text the heroes!" Ojirou commands.

{Group Chat

12857: *(Deku)*

Guys, this probably seems like a random question, but would you like me better if I had a quirk?}

"Quirks don't matter!" "You don't need it!" "This is so frustrating!"

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

What's this about, Deku?

87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Is “Kacchan” giving you trouble again?}

"Not this time." Bakugo grumbles.

{12857: *(Deku)*

No, it’s just...you guys are the first people I’ve ever met who don’t judge me because I’m quirkless, and I appreciate that. But I can’t help but think if I had a quirk, wouldn’t I be more useful? Wouldn’t you like me better if I wasn’t so useless?}

"You're not useless!" Uraraka screeches at the screen.

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

You’re not useless, Deku! I know you’ve been told all your life that quirkless and useless are synonymous, but they’re not! You have so many useful skills that you’ve gained because you are smart and work hard, not because of anything you were born with. You don’t need a quirk to be useful and you don’t need a quirk for us to like you!}

"Damn straight!" Ashido shouts.

{12579: *(Eraserhead)*

I think what Joke’s trying to say is that we would like you exactly the same whether you had a quirk or not. You are the same person with or without extra toe joints, so you don’t need to worry that we’d like you better if you woke up tomorrow puking rainbows.}

"Mental Picture!" someone calls out triggering a cascade of laughter around the room.

{87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Yeah, Deku, you're our friend because of who you are, your personality, and your amazing analysis. All of which would be the same even if you had a quirk, so to us at least, you'd be the same old Deku you are today.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

So, are we gonna talk about what brought this up?

12857: *(Deku)*

It's really nothing, guys. I was just thinking about how hard my life's been and about how it'd be so much easier if I just had a quirk. Sorry to bother you guys.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

You're not bothering us, problem child.

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Yeah, we're always here for you because we love you almost as much as Eraser loves me!}

"Really?" Aizawa deadpans.

{12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Joke!

Izuku stopped chuckling when he heard a knock at his door.

"Deku?" Nighteye's voice said, "Is it alright if I come in?"

Izuku hurriedly wiped away his tears, "Yeah."}

"Did he forget that that hero was in the chat too?" Shigaraki snarks.

Dabi snorts "Looks like it."

{Nighteye poked his head through the door. Anyone who didn't know him well would think his expression was stern, but Izuku could recognize the concern hidden behind the scowl, "I saw the group chat."}

"Whoops!" Izuku snickers.

{Izuku exhaled heavily, "I forgot you could see that."

Nighteye came and sat next to him on the bed, "So, what's wrong? You don't normally struggle with your quirklessness."

For a minute, Izuku considered lying. Considered saying something like that Kacchan had reached out or he'd seen an anti-quirkless post or something. Or maybe he should tell the truth. Tell Nighteye he knew about All Might's quirk, assuming Nighteye knew about it, and that it was really unfair that Toogata gets two quirks while Izuku has to go without. Instead, he did neither of those things.

"I-i guess I'm just jealous?" he said softly. Izuku knew All Might's quirk was supposed to be a secret and he didn't want to deal with the awkwardness if Nighteye and All Might knew he'd figured it out. "Toogata's quirk was already powerful before...before it mutated." A look of guilt flashed across Nighteye's face. So he *did* know. Cool. "I just, I always wanted a quirk so it would help me be a hero. I'm still going to try to be a hero without one, but it'd be *so much easier* if I just had a superpower, you know?"}

"He's already that good at reading people?" Hawks muses impressed.

{Nighteye was silent for a long moment and Izuku was starting to regret ever speaking up. Of course, Nighteye would probably feel guilty about recommending Toogata for All Might's quirk instead of Izuku, he should have thought of that. Stupid.

"What would you do," Nighteye said slowly, "if you got a quirk."

The way he phrased it meant it could be interpreted as what would he have done if he had gotten a quirk like he was supposed to, but Izuku knew what Nighteye was actually asking. *Should I talk to All Might and Toogata and tell them I was wrong?*}

"*What the fuck?*" Izuku whispers with an unreadable expression.

Iida is quick to react "Midoriya are you okay you don't usually swear even when it's more than understandable." concern lacing his voice.

Izuku replies with an obviously fake smile "Oh I'm *fine*. I mean it's not like the only reason he accepted me as a work-study intern was to prove I *didn't* deserve One For All."

His friends are stunned. That any hero would stoop so low, much less one who once worked alongside The Symbol of Piece. After a few deep breaths, Izuku convinces them to turn back to the screen.

> {Izuku shook his head slightly. It was Toogata's quirk now and Izuku wasn't about to take that away from him, but...what would Izuku have done if he had been offered All Might's quirk before Toogata had gotten it? Izuku's mind blanked at the idea. What would he have done? A year ago, he would have jumped at the opportunity, saying yes without any hesitation, all for the chance to be a hero.}

"Circumstances change by the day and so one's goals must follow." Tokoyami rumbles.

> {But what if he had? If All Might had offered him a quirk of his own, he never would have reached out to the hero underground. He never would have become Deku the analyst. And he definitely wouldn't be on track to become the first quirkless hero. He would have used the quirk well, he knew that. He would have found creative ways to use it and he would have been able to save a lot of people, more than he'd probably save quirkless, but…}

"It's true!"
"You right!"
"He's the best!"

> {But then, in ten years, a little kid coming home from a devastating doctor's visit wouldn't be able to google *quirkless heroes* and see someone like them with an actual license. That little kid would have to go through the same hell that Izuku went through going up, wanting to be a hero with no indication that it was even possible for someone like them.}

"Just because you can't *become* the first quirkless hero doesn't mean you can't *train* them in the future." Mei comments seeing the disappointment on Izuku's face.

After a moment of thought he breaks into a bright grin excited at the prospect.

> {“I don’t think I want a quirk.” Izuku said before he had a chance to overthink the whole thing. “My life hasn’t been easy, but it’s not any different than what other quirkless kids face. I want to be able to give hope to people like me and prove that quirkless doesn’t mean useless. I want little kids like me to have hope given to them, rather than have to stubbornly make their own like I did. Does that make sense?”}

"Perfect."
"Amazing."
"Can't wait to see it."

> {Nighteye smiled and nodded, looking relieved, “You’re a good kid, Deku. You’re going to make an amazing hero.”
>
> Izuku smiled and let out a breath, “Now that that’s settled, I have a few ideas on how to help Toogata improve his quirk…”}

Basking in the pride at Deku's self-acceptance the crowd takes a moment to steel themselves for what's to come. As the next chapter begins, tissue boxes in hand, a heavy atmosphere already permeates the room.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

> Next Time: The moment you've all been waiting for
>
> Shout out to Spiritwolf5136 as a desert native I can attest to the need for water checks

MM:SFH Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

The moment you've all been waiting for

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

USJ

{Bakugo tried to keep to himself on the bus ride, but that stupid shitty hair extra just wouldn't leave him alone. He and his equally loud and upbeat friends surrounded Bakugo, who was seriously two seconds from exploding. Not that Bakugo himself wasn't loud, he knew he was, but he was an angry type of loud not...whatever these extras were. They weren't anything like the extras that had followed him around in middle school, those ones only spoke if it was to agree with him or praise his quirk, where these guys talked about everything under the sun and *just wouldn't shut up!* They even had the balls to laugh at him and call his personality a *garbage heap*! Seriously?}

"Oh wow, we really were a wake-up call for you." Kaminari realized.

"My toxic-ass classmates are half the reason I was like that." Bakugo complained.

"That almost sounds like thanks." Ashido teased.

"Whatever helps you sleep at night Raccoon-eyes." He dismisses hiding his smile.

{All Might and Aizawa-sensei sat in the front of the bus, ignoring the class's antics. Aizawa looked almost as annoyed as Bakugo was, probably because All Might wouldn't shut up either. Or

maybe that's just what Aizawa always looked like? It was hard to tell.}

"It's All Might." Aizawa deadpans causing Yagi to sputter.

{He followed the teachers into the facility and rolled his eyes when the stupid space hero started their spiel. Sounds like they *really* wanted the acronym of this place to be the same as Universal Studios Japan. And yeah, he knew quirks could kill, that's why he wanted his name to be *King Explosion Murder*. Ugh, just let him blow some stuff up already.}

Dabi chocked "The kid wanted to call himself *what*?"

"Does he not realize how that sounds?" Shigaraki snipes.

Toga cackles "Is he sure he doesn't want to be a villain?"

{All of a sudden, a purple dot appeared in the center courtyard and Thirteen's voice trailed off as the students started muttering.

"Is this part of the training?"

"No!" Aizawa said as people started pouring out of the strange purple mist, "Those are villains."

The students fell silent as they watched the crowd grow larger. A guy with a hand on his face seemed to be the leader, but he wasn't the one the students' eyes were drawn to. The students took in a collective breath as they saw a short figure in a green hooded jacket, bright eyes visible as they scanned the students.

"I-I thought Mastermind never participated in his crimes…" Yaoyorozu said faintly, "What's different this time?"}

"A personal grudge." Momo whispers solemnly.

{Aizawa was already running down to meet the villains, trying to keep Mastermind and the hand villain in his sights. Unfortunately, this meant that he didn't notice when the mist villain left his field of vision.

"Hello students," The mist villain stood in front of the door, "We would normally take the time to introduce ourselves, but Mastermind assures us time is of the essence."

Bakugo ran forward and saw shitty hair doing the same, but

before they could reach the guy, the ground beneath their feet had disappeared and they were somewhere else entirely, surrounded by villains on every side. Bakugo grinned. Finally, a good excuse to go all out.}

"Damnit they didn't get close enough to notice the fucking brace." Bakugo growls.

"That...that's really bad." Kirishima worries.

{Izuku grinned as all the students were spread throughout the facility. Perfect. All Might would need to track them down before he would be able to help any of them escape, but he'd have to get past the Nomu first. He stalked toward them, flexing his muscles and looking intimidating as his smile turned into a grimace.}

"Well that's terrifying." Dabi deadpans.

{"You fiends, what have you done with them?!"

"Hahaha! Don't worry *All Might*," Shigaraki cackled, "we're not here for them, we're here for you! Nomu, get him!"

The Nomu surged forward and All Might leveled a punch at his gut. Izuku took a sick sort of satisfaction in the look of shock that he saw on All Might's face before Nomu returned his punch and he went flying across the courtyard.}

Shigaraki cackles.

{"Ahhh!" Both pros looked toward the front entrance as a cry rang out from the entrance and Thirteen crumpled under the force of their own quirk. There wasn't time for them to dwell on it, however, because the Nomu charged and the horde of villains swarmed Eraserhead. Izuku stood back and watched as both pros fought. It really was quite impressive.}

"Come on Sensei!"
"Please!"
"Win!"

{He heard panicked screaming and glanced over to the shipwreck zone in time to see a girl jumping ashore with two purple-haired boys in her arms, one of which was the source of the screams. *How heroic.*}

"I'm working on it!" Mineta cries.

{Many of the villains were sitting dazed in the water, apparently in some sort of a trance, most likely the other purple-haired boy's quirk. It couldn't be the girl's, considering she was moving like a frog. He'd have to be careful of that boy.}

"I'm already there?" Shinsou whispers questioning his life choices.

{Kurogiri had rejoined the fight in the main plaza as All Might suplexed Nomu, opening a portal and allowing Nomu to grab All might from below. All Might grimaced as Nomu's claws dug into the old wound at his side and he started pulling All Might through the portal but was interrupted when a massive wave of ice froze him in place, allowing the hero to escape.}

"Go Todoroki!"
"Nice job!"
"Get 'em!"

{Izuku whipped around to look at the source, finding a boy with red and white hair glaring at him. He pulled out a pair of combat knives and ran toward the student, only to be blocked by Eraserhead, who had finally finished dispatching the crowd of villains he'd faced. Izuku dodged the capture weapon and slashed at the pro, who jumped back just in time. Eraserhead had his quirk focused on Mastermind, but it didn't slow him down at all. The two were evenly matched when it came to combat: Eraser had more experience, but Mastermind had knives and wasn't afraid to kill.}

"Get the fuck away from sensei Murder Me." Izuku growls at the screen. His friends balk in shock either from the sudden swear or the new nickname for his stab-happy counterpoint.

{"Die!" Izuku flinched as Bakugo yelled, but his old bully and another red-haired student headed straight for Kurogiri instead. Izuku turned back to Eraserhead, Kurogiri could fight for himself. Bakugo let loose an explosion as the two neared the mist villain, but instead of hitting him like they'd obviously planned, their attacks went straight through him.}

"Shit, shit, shit!" Bakugo shouts.

{"That was close. You, students, are too problematic." And with that, he warped all three students away again. Even if the

students had managed to defeat all the villains in the areas they were warped to, it would still take them time to get back to the plaza.}

"Nonononononono."
"This is bad!"
"*Please*"

{A tearing sound echoed as the Nomu tore himself from the ice and regenerated his lost limbs.}

"Oh god that's disturbing." Kendo whispers in horror. Monoma stares in shocked silence.

{“Did you think shock absorption was Nomu’s only quirk?” Shigaraki’s grating voice taunted as his smile turned deranged underneath his hand mask. “He was designed to withstand you at 100% of your power, *All Might.*”}

"And he still beat it!" Jiro called out.

{All Might clutched his side and stood tall, spitting out a mouthful of blood, “Shock absorption, huh? Not nullification.” All Might rushed toward Nomu and let loose a flurry of blows that the Nomu returned with vigor, “That means there’s a limit to what you can take! You’ve already told me how to beat him. If he’s designed to withstand 100% of my power, I’ll just have to go beyond that!”}

"PLUS ULTRA!" the students cry out on instinct.

{Izuku smirked, but Eraser tried to take advantage of his distraction and attack despite the high winds from the fight.

“Not so fast, Eraserhead.” Shigaraki ran up behind the pro and grabbed his elbow right before he had to blink. Eraserhead’s elbow began to disintegrate and he cried out in pain. Izuku ran forward and Eraser reared his head back as a blade narrowly missed his eyes, leaving a long jagged cut on his right cheekbone. Shigaraki threw him toward the floor and Izuku kicked him in the head, knocking him unconscious.}

"And I got the same scar in a different way." Aizawa grumbles.

"At least *he* doesn't have a skull fracture." Recovery Girl sighs, not unkindly.

{“Plus! ULTRA!” All Might cried. The Nomu went flying through the ceiling of the USJ and All Might turned to face Shigaraki. Most of the students had already escaped the zones and were gathered around the edge of the plaza, cheering for their hero's victory.}

"He did it!"
"Yes!"
"Go All Might!"

{Izuku used the dust cover to slowly sneak around as All Might began monologuing, “You’ve been bested, villains. Surrender!”

Izuku smiled as he noticed the steam mixed in with dust. All Might was nearing his limit if he wasn’t past it already. Izuku adjusted his grip on the knife in his hand as he snuck up behind the hero.}

"NO!"
"BEHIND YOU!"
"STOP!"

{All Might remained focused on convincing Shigaraki of his bluff, “What’s wrong? Not attacking me? Didn’t you want to clear this level? Come and get me if you dare!”

Shigaraki smiled, “Oh, I fully plan on clearing it, but you don’t face the big boss alone.”}

"Smooth one Dusty." Dabi compliments.

Shigaraki just grins.

{Izuku took that as his cue. He grinned as he stabbed All Might right in his old injury. A puff of steam erupted and All Might coughed up blood as the smoke cleared to reveal the skeletal form of Toshinori Yagi.}

"ALL MIGHT!"
"PLEASE, NO!"
Sobs

{“All Might!” Some students cried out and others just wordlessly screamed.

“What’s wrong, All Might?” Shigaraki said gleefully, “I thought

we'd been bested?"}

"This is beautiful." Shigaraki sighs airily.

{Izuku pulled out his knife, only to stab the hero again and twist the knife. All Might was choking on his own blood now and Izuku pulled the hero's head back by the hair, "So much for the symbol of peace," Izuku whispered in his ear, "I guess even people with strong quirks like you can't be heroes." All Might struggled weakly for a moment before slowly going limp as he lost too much blood. Izuku put away his knife and tossed the hero's lifeless form to the ground before checking his pulse. He smirked as he stood and stepped over the body.}

"STOP IT!"
"BASTARD!"
"JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE!"

{"Congratulations, Shigaraki! You did it!"

The students cried and screamed, unable to move as Shigaraki laughed. Suddenly a voice raised over the rest of the students, "You bastards! Who do you think you are?"}

"Shinsou!?"
"Yes, catch them!"
"Respond, please respond!"

{Shigaraki was about to reply when Izuku held up a hand to make him stop. He turned to the tall purple-haired student, who was staring at him defiantly, "What? Not gonna say anything?"}

"Please *please* fall for it." Shinsou begs.

{Izuku scanned the faces of the other students, seeing traces of hope among the terror and grief. He thought back to the dazed villains from the shipwreck zone and turned back to the student, who obviously wanted him to respond. He simply smiled at the student and turned to Shigaraki, "Come on Shigaraki, let's gather your forces and go home. We've done what we came here to do."}

"Damnit!"
"We were so close!"
"*Damnit!*"
"No!"
"*DAMNIT!*"

"He's really gone!"

{Kurogiri spread out his mists to retrieve the villains as Shigaraki got the last word, “Remember the League of Villains, *heroes*, you’ll be facing us again soon enough.”

He and Izuku disappeared through the warp gate, leaving the students alone.

The doors to the USJ opened slowly and Nedzu walked in with several other teachers.

“Is everything alright? We heard an explosion...oh my!” The teachers took in the tear-marked faces of the students, Thirteen lying near the door with a lacerated back, Eraserhead by the fountain bleeding heavily from a head wound, and, finally, All Might’s skeletal form lying in a pool of his own blood.

They were too late.}

Sobs and cries of grief fill the room as the student mourn their lifelong hero and resent teacher. The man who took down villains with a beaming smile and gave them meat buns on their days off. The man whose first student and successor is their kind and caring classmate. All while the teachers leave their seats to comfort their students; All Might himself flits around the room to remind each student that *he is here*, right in front of them. Meanwhile, the villains are cheering and celebrating the death of a hero behind a sound barrier preventing them from harassing the mourning crowd, party poppers and all.

When the noise level fell and everyone returned to seats with little more than sniffles and whimpers Headcase hesitantly began the next chapter.

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

'Problem Child'

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Aizawa: I've connected the dots

V:TGG Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Aizawa: I've connected the dots

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Problem Child

{Shouta couldn't help playing with the marble Viridian had thrown at him earlier as he sat by Tsukauchi's desk after his shift. The kid was smart, making the marbles pull triple duty as a way to call heroes, ammo, and a sort of makeshift signature. Viridian would be a popular and effective hero if he'd just get off the streets and into a hero program, but first, he'd have to learn how to take better care of himself, because he really shouldn't be on the streets the night after he was almost killed.}

"Ask for the impossible." Todoroki deadpans.

"Hey! I'm getting better." Izuku defends.

"Slowly." Iida corrects causing his friend to pout.

{The kid must have an insane pain tolerance to be out and fighting so soon. The only indication that Viridian had been injured at all was a moderately slower running speed and a slight stiffness when he twisted, but he hadn't let it hold him back as he fought. Shouta didn't know if Viridian had broken his ribs, or just bruised them, but the kid shouldn't be so used to working through the pain. He also shouldn't be used to hiding his injuries. Shouta wasn't even sure the problem child had been doing it consciously, because the way the kid had been doing it instinctively, like pretending he was fine was a habit he'd developed after years of

practice.}

"Oh sensei's connecting the dots." Kaminari bounces in his seat.

"I'm so tempted." Ashido whispers.

"Mina." Sero warns.

"But..." She whines "*memes*."

{And wasn't *that* concerning? Viridian's obviously high pain tolerance and tendency to hide his injuries were just the latest entries in a disturbingly long list of concerns that Shouta had about the kid. He ran straight into danger when the most intelligent thing to do was run away, and if there was one thing Shouta knew, it was that Viridian wasn't stupid. He'd known the kid was smart just from the way he'd memorized everyone's patrol routes and that intelligence had only been confirmed by the way he targeted any weakness he could in his target's defenses.}

"He's going to be one *knock out* hero." Midnight grins.

"Not gonna scold her for that one?" Mic asked.

"The brats have started shipping me," Aizawa deadpans "I consider it revenge."

{But then he'd seen the notebook.

The kid was probably a genius and Nedzu would be salivating if he'd had a chance to read what Shouta had, and yet the kid insisted he wasn't smart. At first, Shouta had assumed he was joking, but the more he thought about the conversation they'd had earlier, the more he realized that Viridian honestly believed what he'd said. Shouta didn't know if he even wanted to think about what must have happened in Viridian's life to convince the kid that he was an idiot despite his obvious skills and that was even more true if he had an analysis quirk.}

"I do quite look forward to a discussion with the young man once we've returned home." Nedzu confirms much to his employee's dismay.

{Which brought Shouta back to his list of concerns. If the kid thought he was stupid despite his intelligence, what other lies did

he believe? Did he somehow think he was worthless? Did he think that his life was worth less than the lives of the people he saved? Shouta thought back to the fight with the crab villain. Viridian hadn't thought twice about giving up his weapons so Shouta could fight more effectively, and then the first thing he'd done after the fight was asked if Shouta was ok, with no regard for his own safety or well-being.}

"Yes, yes, come on sensei." Hagakure hopes.

{It was like Viridian had decided, at that moment, that it was ok if he died, as long as Shouta lived.

He stared at the marble again, seeing how the green and black swirled together. Was the kid….?}

"Come on Eraserhead, get to it already." Shigaraki gripes.

{"Oh! You got one too!"

Shouta flinched as Amplifier's overly peppy voice practically yelled behind him and he almost dropped the marble. As it was, he fumbled it and only just managed to palm it before it rolled onto the floor.}

"Oops." Amplifier winced.

{He turned to glare at Amplifier, who smiled sheepishly at him, "Sorry…"

"What do you guys have?" Tsukauchi asked as he walked up with paperwork and coffee.

"Viridian's got a new calling card!" Amplifier grinned and dug around in her pockets before triumphantly showing Tsukauchi a green marble identical to the one Shouta had almost dropped. "He's started throwing these instead of rocks so that we know it's him."

Tsukauchi frowned at the marble, then turned to Shouta, "And you have one too?"

Shouta sighed and showed Tsukauchi his marble. Honestly, he wouldn't be surprised if the marble became a badge of honor among the local heroes. He could see them turning into a sort of membership card for an exclusive club of heroes Viridian trusted

even though Viridian went to heroes based on availability, not trust or competence. Still, he wouldn't put it beyond his colleagues to start collecting them.}

"Totally." Joke snickered.

"Gotta do something on those slow nights." Rock Lock confirmed.

"It'd be nice." Brave smirked.

"You're all ridiculous." Eraser sighs.

{"It seems he's embracing his popularity then." Tsukauchi said bitterly. "If he's putting in the extra effort to have a signature."

"I don't think that's what he had in mind." Shouta said as he put his marble away. "I don't know if you've heard, but Viridian somehow got his hands on a slingshot, and the marbles are his primary ammo. As far as I know, he wasn't actually planning on them being a calling card."

"He has a slingshot!?" Amplifier bounced up and down in her seat. "Have you seen him use it? Is his aim any good?"

Shouta nodded, "He hasn't mastered it by any means, but he's good enough to get the job done. He led me to a group earlier and kept pelting them with marbles to distract them and make them easier for me to take down, and he didn't hit me once. He'll probably get better with it the longer he trains, but for now, he seems to be more comfortable with close-range combat. He has some dual-wielding pipes that he uses as bludgeoning weapons."

"Pipes?" Tsukauchi asked. "Aren't they considered an improvised weapon? Why didn't he invest in something better, like tonfa? There are more than enough illegal weapons dealers that he wouldn't have a problem finding something."}

"Except he hasn't actually broken the law and he's not about to start now." Tsukauchi sighs.

{"And yet the problem child chooses to use something that can be bought at literally any hardware store." Shouta said. "It does make him harder to track."}

"Not the point but go off." Jiro deadpans causing Momo to snort and subsequently blush at making such a sound.

{“Not that we’re going to bother.” Amplifier piped up. “He’s not hurting anyone.”

“He’s a vigilante.” Tsukauchi said sternly. “And we need to be prepared to capture him if he ever crosses the line into villainy. You both know how common that is.”

They were all silent for a moment as they remembered Stendhal and the other vigilantes who had turned. Vigilantes tended to make extremely frightening villains.}

"So, since undergrounds work with vigilantes..." Koda hesitates "does that mean sensei has had to bring in his friends?"

"Being a hero will never be easy, mon ami." Aoyama says sadly.

{“Viridian’s still young.” Shouta said finally. “There’s still time to guide him onto the right path.”

“Yeah!” Amplifier agreed. “He’s just a kid, so go easy on him, Tsuky.”}

"Don't call me that." Tsukauchi demands.

{Tsukauchi signed heavily, “Just keep an eye on him. If he gives any indication that he’s going too far, you need to bring him in. If we catch him quickly enough, he might even be a candidate for the vigilante rehabilitation program.”

“That dusty old thing?” Amplifier asked. “I thought it was just an artifact from the time when hero licenses were still getting started. Has anyone even gone through the program in the last few decades?”}

"No but it's still a useful tool." Nedzu grins.

{“It’s not common by any means,” Shouta said, “because society expects heroes to start legally now, but the laws are still on the books. Since the program hasn’t been overturned, law enforcement can still petition the hero commission to allow a vigilante to participate, provided that they don’t use excessive force in their takedowns.”}

"We don't have to worry about that." Uraraka says proudly.

{“And since vigilantes like Knuckleduster, who routinely beat

villains to a pulp, are more common," Tsukauchi said, "most modern vigilantes don't qualify. The hero commission isn't likely to approve an untrained kid like Viridian for the program anyway, otherwise, I'd try to get him approved now."}

Endeavor blinks at that "So you *have* to let vigilantes gain a reputation before you bring them in?"

"So long as they're not overly violent yes we do." Aizawa confirms.

{"I guess that makes sense." Amplifier pouted. "But I would still love to see Viridian as a legit hero. Can you imagine seeing kids with green hoodies and little marbles on keychains or something?"

"What makes you think he'll even want merch?" Shouta said. "He might want to stay underground."

"Don't be ridiculous!" Amplifier waved away his concerns. "He's a happy young teenager, of course, he wants to be famous!"}

"Not with an anxiety disorder." Izuku laughs. After he sees the concerned looks of his friend he adds "I will tolerate fame but it doesn't mean that's my goal, I mean, you know me."

{Shouta frowned. The kid had only had one article written about him, but even that had seemed to make him uncomfortable. And Shouta was also worried that *happy* wasn't the right word to describe Viridian's mental state…

"What's wrong, Eraser?" Tsukauchi asked. "Something's nagging at you."

"It's just…" Shouta dragged a hand down his face, making him look even more exhausted than he actually was. "There's a lot of little things that have been adding up and I'm not quite sure what to do about it."}

"Spread the work, ask for help, you always say how important teamwork is." Sato comments.

{"Maybe we can help." Tsukauchi said kindly. "What's bothering you?"

"I think Viridian might be depressed." Shouta said.

“What?” Amplifier said. “He’s a teenage boy, why would he be depressed?”}

"He's a teenage boy, why wouldn't he be?" Shinsou snarks.

{“From what I’ve gathered, he doesn’t have the best life.” Shouta started rolling the marble between his fingers again, “Last night, he almost died helping me with a fight, but he was out again tonight, fighting like it had never even happened.”

“So he’s reckless.” Tsukauchi said. “That’s pretty common in teenagers. It doesn’t mean he’s depressed.”

“Yes, being reckless is normal in teenagers, I’m a teacher, so I know that better than most, but Viridian’s recklessness goes beyond what I see in my students.” Shouta said. “It’s almost like he believes that his life isn’t worth anything, which isn’t an attitude someone develops overnight.”}

"I will say this," Aizawa says turning to All Might "you're probably half the reason Midoriya has recovered as much as he has." making the man beamed.

{“You think he might be being abused.” Tsukauchi said in realization.

Shouta shook his head, “Not at home. Viridian’s never mentioned that, but when I mentioned school once, the kid completely shut down.”

“Bullies...” Tsukauchi said.

Shouta nodded, “He acts like he’s used to hiding injuries and pain, so it’s possible he’s been trying to hide the bullying from his family.”}

"I'm just glad it never got that far for me." Izuku mumbled glancing over to Bakugo catching the guilt the boy carefully hides whenever these stories bring up their less-than-stellar past.

{“That means he’s been treating his injuries himself, doesn’t it?” Amplifier said. “Remember that first time I actually talked to him? A store clerk got severe burns during a robbery and when I went to go check on the victim, Viridian had already given first aid. When I asked him how he knew how to do that, he just said he’d had a lot of practice. I didn’t think anything of it at the time,

but do you think…?”

Shouta sighed, “Unfortunately, yes, he most likely had to practice on himself. I don’t think the bullying is entirely physical, though. Psychologically…”

He trailed off. It was just a hunch, but he hoped he was wrong. He hoped that Viridian was emotionally resilient and had access to the correct resources to deal with the abuse he faced at home. He hoped that the problem child had become a vigilante because he thought they were cool or to annoy the heroes. But…}

"But he's hiding everything." Ojirou finishes.

{Tsukauchi gestured for him to continue and Shouta sighed, “He doesn’t know his own worth. I got a peek at his notebook tonight and the kid is brilliant, but he seems to genuinely believe that he’s stupid. He runs into fights that he isn’t prepared for and he doesn’t seem to care about his own safety, despite the fact that he is almost excessively worried about the safety of the victims and even the heroes he’s fighting with. The first time I met him, I told him that he shouldn’t get into fights because he didn’t want to die and he hesitated!”}

"Say it! Just say it already!" Ashido cries on the verge of tears.

{Shouta rubbed the bridge of his nose in exhaustion and frustration as Amplifier and Tsukauchi stared at him with wide eyes.

“I think Viridian might be suicidal.”}

The screen fades much to the dismay of the audience. Relieved the heroes and police are aware or at least suspect, Viridian's mental state. Now they can only hope he will accept the help they offer.

The next chapter loads quickly, everyone settling in to watch Cheat Code navigate his way through the support course.

Now playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Classmates and discrimination

CC:SS Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Classmates and discriminations

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Risk and Reward

{Izuku intentionally left later than he should have for school so that he wouldn't have to deal with his classmates which was worth the risk of running into Katsuki on the train. He honestly wasn't planning on being as late as he was, but when he reached the station, he caught sight of Katsuki already waiting for the train. Luckily, he was facing the other way so he hadn't seen Izuku yet and he was able to hide around the corner until the train left. It meant that Izuku had to wait for the next train, but he wouldn't have to deal with an angry Katsuki, so it was all good.}

"Is this going to turn into a situation like in 'Deku'?" Ashido asks very worriedly.

"I hope not." Sero comments.

{As it was, Izuku ended up sliding into the little desk outside his workroom right as the bell rang. Mei was sending him the stink eye, but he resolutely ignored her as Powerloader walked to the front of the room. He knew she was just trying to do what she thought was best for him, but she'd never had to deal with being quirkless before.}

"It is an *experience*." Izuku huffs.

{“Alright class, settle down.” Powerloader said. “Welcome to the support course! Today, you’re going to be deciding on and starting your semester projects. These have to be approved by me, and I’ll also be looking over them as you work to evaluate your progress and help you improve. I would personally recommend choosing a project that you would be able to use in the sports festival, since you’re allowed to bring any support items you want, as long as you made them yourself. It’s still a ways away, but it can sneak up on you if you’re not careful.”

Izuku thought back to the project that the principal had given him. It wasn’t an invention, but knowing all the first-year hero students’ quirks would give him an edge that nobody else would have, so maybe that was why Nedzu assigned him to analyze their quirks. He should try to give each of the students a few suggestions before the sports festival as well, to help them do well. He glanced over at Mei, who was already messing with the materials on her desk in excitement. Choosing just one project would be difficult for her.}

"You have no idea." Mei pouts

{Powerloader called his attention back to the front of the room, “You are also allowed to work on other projects for extra credit if you want. These have to be approved by me just the same as if they were official projects, they just don’t have to go as in-depth. I will be right up here if you have any questions or want to get your project approved, so don’t hesitate to ask.”

With that, he sat back down and left them to their work. Izuku immediately bolted into his room so Mei couldn’t try to force him to make friends and closed the door behind him with a sigh. Immediately, his attention was grabbed by a non-descript post-it note stuck to the central screen of his computer. Izuku approached it hesitantly, fully expecting some hatred-filled death threat. It wouldn’t be the first time, though his desk this morning had been notably clear of graffiti, which was a pleasant surprise. Though maybe Mei had just scared them out of doing something that obvious. Izuku hadn’t ever had someone willing to protect him like that before.}

"Did that happen in our world?" Uraraka asked with a fire in her eyes.

"Sorta?" Izuku answered "The notes I got were insulting yeah but I've never gotten a death threat."

"Except from Bakugo." Todoroki deadpans.

"Yeah but he says that stuff to everyone and rarely ever means it." Izuku concedes.

"True, kero."

{Izuku didn't even notice himself clenching his eyes shut as he snatched the note off the screen and had to force himself to take a peek, only for his eyes to widen in shock and relief as he realized that the note was actually from Nedzu, not his classmates.

Midoriya,

Here's the password to the camera systems!

Ra+_0verlord

Burn this note.

Nedzu

;)}

"Note to self; change camera password." Nedzu sighs.

{Izuku read it twice until he was sure that he would be able to remember the password before looking around. Did his room have matches? He checked all the drawers and found every office supply he never knew he needed, but nothing that would allow him to burn the note as instructed. He couldn't just tear it up! Someone could potentially reassemble it and gain access to the cameras and it would all be Izuku's fault and then…}

"Deep breaths kid." Dabi chuckles.

{His spiral stopped when he happened to glance out his window and notice Mei hard at work. She made so many things explode that she had to have something capable of burning a tiny piece of paper...right?}

Mei starts laughing so hard she can barely breathe; laughing somehow even harder after Izuku's comment of "Ask a stupid question."

{But if he asked for her help, she might force him to confront their classmates, unless, of course, she was so distracted with her inventing that she completely forgot about her self-declared side

quest. Izuku bit his lip and watched her for another long moment before deciding that it was a safe enough bet.}

"That's where you're wrong!" Mei claims.

{The noise hit him immediately as soon as he opened the door. Almost everyone was working on something and the happy sounds of drills and power tools seemed to come from every direction as he walked toward Mei's table.

"Mei-chan, Nedzu gave me this note and asked me to burn it. Do you have something that'd be able to take care of it?"

Mei whipped her head around to face him and he leaned back as the crosshairs in her eyes narrowed before she gave him a manic grin, "Oooh! A note-burning baby? I can make one!"

She reached for the note, but Izuku held it out of her reach, "Actually, Mei-chan, I was hoping for something a little faster."

Mei pouted, "You're no fun, Izu-Kun."

"Nope." Izuku agreed, "Now, are you gonna help me, or not?"

Mei glared at him for another moment before sighing and turning on her blowtorch. Izuku smiled brightly at her as he lit the corner of the note on fire and let it burn for a few seconds before dropping it onto the floor and stomping out the flames once the note had completely turned to ash. Their classmates seemed to be giving them a wide berth as they watched the exchange, but that was just fine by him.}

"I am a weird kid." Izuku comments.

"That does explain this friend group." Mei agrees. Not a single member of the squad can come up with an argument for that so just accept it as fact.

{"Thanks, Mei-chan! Good luck on your project!" Izuku started to walk back to his room but was stopped in his tracks by Mei grabbing his arm.

"Oh no you don't." Mei's grip tightened slightly as she grinned savagely. "Izuku Hacker Midoriya, you are going to talk to your classmates if it kills you!"

Izuku was honestly convinced that it might, “You’re my *friend*, Mei! Shouldn’t you be trying to keep me alive?”

“Oh, shut up, you’re not gonna die.” Mei waved the hand that wasn’t holding Izuku hostage dismissively. “Now, everybody, listen up! This idiot thinks that you’re all gonna hate him just because he was born with an extra toe joint or whatever, so he needs you to beat it through his thick skull that not everybody is like his old stupid bullies!”

Izuku hid his face in his hands and groaned as it turned red. It wasn’t a safe bet. Well, at least he’d successfully burned the note and he could deal with all of his classmates' rejections at once. Small mercies, right?

He prepared himself for the worst when he heard Kohaku scoff, “You’re fucking kidding, right?” Izuku uncovered his face to find her looking *extremely* unimpressed, “If we’re gonna hate you, it’ll be because of something you *did*, loser.”}

"I like her." Bakugo smirks.

"Of course you do." Sero rolls his eyes with a huge grin.

{Izuku blinked a few times and flinched as someone patted his shoulder heavily. He looked up to see Hanzou grinning at him, something that was *really* intimidating, considering his three rows of sharp teeth, “Yeah, dude, rejecting someone based on a quirk is totally uncool.”}

"Preach!"
"Tell him!"
"That's right!"

{Izuku’s eyes widened and he glanced over the rest of the class, looking for any sign that they disagreed with what the other two had said. Most of his classmates just looked like they didn’t care either way, which hadn’t ever happened before, and the only one who didn’t look bored with the whole thing was Shiguro, who was currently trembling, “Um...being quirkless doesn’t make you any less terrifying, Midoriya.”}

snort
"I mean he's not wrong."
"Definitely"

{Mei gave a shocked laugh and Izuku's jaw dropped, "I, uh...what? I'm not that scary, am I?"

Kohaku rolled her eyes, "Yeah, and my hair's not a pain to brush. You caught the attention of Principal Nedzu, Midoriya. Of course, you're scary!"

Powerloader cleared his throat and the class all turned to him, "Midoriya, UA has a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying and discrimination. You shouldn't have to worry about that, and if anyone gives you a hard time because of your quirk, you are more than welcome to report that to me or to Nedzu."

"And I won't get in trouble?" Izuku asked, now reeling from shock. This all seemed like a dream. A good dream! But still a dream.}

The theater suddenly finds itself with a horrifyingly heavy silence as such information is processed.

{He clamped his mouth shut when he noticed the heavy silence that had blanketed the room in stark contrast to the happy sounds of working that had greeted him when he'd first left his room. His classmates were staring at him with various expressions of disbelief, shock, and even anger.

"You used to get in trouble for reporting discrimination?!" Kohaku asked. "What the fuck?!"

"Well, it's just that every school has a zero bullying policy," Izuku hurried to explain, "but most teachers tend to think that it's not a big deal. Or, not big enough to get a promising student in trouble for, but then something has to be done about the complaint and someone has to be punished, so...yeah."}

"I wonder if Nedzu will let us help with that school's demolition." Koda says uncharacteristically angry.

{"You don't have to worry about that anymore." Powerloader said firmly. "We actually *follow* our policies here. We couldn't call ourselves heroes if we didn't even protect our students from each other."}

"Damn straight!" Midnight shouts at the screen, joined by her coworkers in outrage and support.

{“Thank you so much, goodbye!” Izuku held hurriedly and rushed back into his room and slammed the door, wiping at his eyes furiously the moment he was out of sight. They really wouldn’t let him get bullied? It just seemed so surreal! He couldn’t resist the urge to pinch his arm to make sure that he hadn’t just overslept somehow, but even though he pinched his arm hard enough to make the skin turn red, he was still at UA, staring at his private room with a setup of computers that the principal had personally set up. This was really real.}

"Hell yeah it is!"
"Welcome to UA!"
"We're happy to have you here!"

{After a minute or so, Izuku took a deep breath to steady himself and sat down at his computer. If UA was going to do so much to help him, the least he could do was become an analyst they could be proud of, starting with his assignment from Nedzu.

Analyzing the hero course first years.}

As the screen fades the room fills with debate on which student he'll analyze first. Headcase waits patiently for someone to remember what's coming. It's s Kaminari whose attention turns to the screen for just long enough to see the new title. "Guys, guys, shut it's time for the new story!" People quickly return to their seats ready and waiting for yet another possibility.

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: A new beginning

Y'all I started an original fic called 'Agents of Chaos' be sure to check it out.

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

A new beginning

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Fear as a Weapon

{Izuku couldn't breathe.

"Sorry kid." The sludge villain squeezed a little tighter. "I didn't know All Might was in town, I can't afford to stick around."}

"You were attacked by that thing too!?" Uraraka shrieked.

"Uraraka, look at me, I'm fine." Izuku comforts.

{Izuku's vision started going dark and he clawed uselessly at the villain. This was really it, wasn't it? He was going to die. Reluctantly, he stopped fighting, slowly giving into fear and dread as the rest of his air ran out.}

"It's okay, it's okay, we know he survives this." Kaminari comforts himself.

{"Detroit….Smash!!!"

Izuku heard a terrified scream from the villain before he passed out and the next thing he knew he was getting slapped awake by All Might. Wait…}

"Slapped awake? Toshinori you dunce." Gran smacked the man.

"I know." All Might sighs.

{“All Might?!” Izuku sat straight up. “You saved me?! Of course, you saved me! I...thank you for saving me, I have a notebook...will you please…”

All Might gave a booming laugh and handed him his notebook, “Already done, my boy! My apologies for letting you get caught by that villain! Back in the day, he would never have even reached the sewers! Now if you’ll excuse me I must be on my way!”}

"Get him medical attention!" Recovery Girl whacked him with her cane.

{“Wait!” Izuku reached toward him. “I have so much to ask…”

Kacchan was right. Izuku was an idiot. He’d realized that All Might was about to launch off, but he’d grabbed onto his leg anyway. He knew how far All Might could jump! He *knew* every statistic there was on him! He knew how dangerous that was! Why in the world had he done that?!}

Izuku buries his head in his hands avoiding the disbelieving looks of his friends.

{As soon as he noticed Izuku, All Might started shaking his leg, “Come on, kid, I get being a fan, but this is too much!”}

"This just keeps getting worse and we're not even to the part where you *crush his dream*." Aizawa snarls.

"I'm afraid it will get worse still." Yagi warns reluctantly.

{Izuku clung on even tighter, “If I let go now I’ll die!”

“Oh…” All Might blinked like he hadn’t even thought about that and grabbed Izuku’s collar. “Right. Just close your mouth and eyes kid. You look gross.”}

"The Number One Hero everybody." Dabi snarks dramatically.

{Izuku did as he was told and after a few seconds, he felt a jolt as All Might landed. Immediately, all the terror-fueled strength he hadn’t known he’d had left him and he collapsed onto the ground, “I’m alive!”}

"I'd probably be kissing the ground after that." Mineta snickers.

"You'd have wet your pants too." Jiro huffs.

{“Barely.” All Might huffed. “What was so important that you did something so stupid, kid?”}

"Okay, I don't remember being that harsh." All Might says confused.

{“I…” Izuku pulled himself to his feet. “I needed to ask you a question.”

“Well, kid, out with it.” All Might prodded. “I don’t have all day, you know!”}

"Wow that All Might is being a lot meaner than ours was." Izuku wrinkles his nose.

{Izuku took a deep breath, “It’s just...my whole life, I’ve wanted to be a hero, but everybody says I can’t. So, uh, is it possible...even though I’m quirkless, can I be a hero like you?!”

Sometime while he was talking, smoke started filling the rooftop and by the time he gathered his courage to look, All Might was...gone? Izuku screamed.}

Snort
"Fair."
"Mood."
"Same."

{“It’s still me kid, don’t be so dramatic.” All Might groaned and lifted up his shirt to show Izuku a large scar. “This is a scary career kid. You fight powerful villains head-on long enough and...well, this injury was just one guy. So can you be a hero kid? Not without a quirk.”

All Might kept talking, but Izuku was too focused on holding back his tears to hear any of it. At some point, All Might pushed past him and after that, there was really no point in staying, so Izuku forced himself to get moving. He’d really just been lying to himself all these years, hadn’t he?}

"Wait you left him there?" Midnight rounded on All Might "Tell me you didn't *leave him there*!"

"That was a really bad day, and I regret most of it." All Might confirms. The faculty turn back to the screen fuming.

{Izuku didn't really know where he was going. Probably home, since there was no point in going to the villain fight he could hear going on in the distance, now that his notes were useless. If even All Might said it was impossible, then it was true. He couldn't be a hero. What was he going to do now?

He was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he almost didn't hear the commotion in the alleyway. It wasn't nearly as loud as the fight in the distance, but it was still enough to get his attention. Now that he was paying attention, Izuku could hear punches being landed and someone yelling about a villain and before he knew it, he was walking toward the fight on autopilot. It must be a minor villain, probably with a weaker quirk. The ones with stronger quirks usually drew a crowd and most of the heroes were probably at the other fight, so even if he was still going to be a hero, there really wasn't any point in watching.}

"Unless you want to go underground." Shinsou huffs.

{He found himself rushing to the alley anyway, only to skid to a stop as he realized it wasn't a villain fight at all. A group of kids his own age was clumped around a few ringleaders, who were either pinning down or beating up their current victim, a lanky kid with purple hair and...well, it was most likely a verbal quirk, considering that the bullies were bothering to cover his mouth. If it had been Izuku, Kacchan would have just let him scream.}

"Oh wonderful, another extra asshole version of me." Bakugo grumbles.

"So should we be placing bets on which versions get comeuppance and which ones get redemption?" Kaminari asks.

"The viridian version is definitely going the redemption route." Ashido claims.

"Mastermind is totally dragging his version down with him eventually." Sero Agrees.

"I hope the other three get better but I'm not holding my breath." Kirishima huffs while patting Bakugo's shoulder.

Meanwhile...

"Oh joy, I'm getting my ass kicked." Shinsou sighs.

{“Why are you even *thinking* of applying for UA?” One of the ringleaders sneered. “You’re a villain and that’s what you’ll always be! Why would a school like UA even *think* of letting someone like you be a hero?!”}

"UA does *not* discriminate against applicants." Nedzu says with a strange level of calm.

{So the kid had a villain’s quirk. Izuku winced sympathetically. That was pretty much as bad as being quirkless in a lot of people’s eyes. Somebody landed a punch to the kid’s gut and he let out a muffled grunt. Izuku couldn’t help himself. He’d stood between Kacchan and the other kids so many times that his feet moved on their own and he took two steps forward until the kid saw him. Instead of looking at him with hope or gratefulness, though, the kid just shook his head sternly. Izuku froze.}

"I hate it but I get it." Izuku growls.

"What do you mean, Kero?" Tsu asked concerned.

"Sometimes an attempt to help can just make things worse." Todoroki says blankly. This worries their friends but they know better than to push; everyone has things they'd rather not say.

{One of the bullies snarled, “What are you looking at, *villain*?”

Izuku ducked behind a dumpster as the bully turned his head. The kid obviously didn’t want him interfering, not that Izuku could do much good anyway, but still… After a few seconds, he peeked out but made sure to keep to the shadows as much as he could so he wouldn’t be seen. The bullies were looking around nervously and even though they’d turned back to the kid, they had obviously been thrown off their rhythm. Interesting...}

"I do love some fear tactics." Aizawa nods to himself.

{“Do you think he somehow called for one of his villain friends?” One of the lackeys hissed. “What are we gonna do if he calls for backup?”}

"Get your asses handed to you like you deserve." Jiro snarks.

{“He didn’t call for backup.” A ringleader insisted, but Izuku noted with surprise that he didn’t believe it. “The villain doesn’t have any friends to come to help him in the first place.”}

"Yet." Izuku mumbles.

{Izuku frowned. He at least had Kacchan, even though he wasn't quite sure if that counted as friendship, but from the sound of it, this kid didn't have any friends at all...that must be so lonely! There must be something he could do to help…}

"Please don't." Shinsou groans.

{The bullies were still nervous and a couple had started shifting like they were about to bolt. Izuku had to stop himself before he started muttering. They were that thrown off just by the suggestion that backup was coming? What were they so afraid of? Was it just that they didn't know what might come? If they knew who was hiding, they wouldn't be scared at all, so that fear of the unknown must be part of it. What if they thought he had a strong quirk? Would they be more scared or less?}

"Better to face the enemy you know, then traverse a path through the unknown." Tokoyami agrees.

{One of the bullies glanced around the alley before huffing and shoving the kid to the ground, "Whatever, I was getting bored anyway. Don't even bother applying to UA, *villain*."

The kid glared after them and Izuku ducked back behind the dumpster as they stalked out of the alley. He waited until the last one was gone before running toward the kid, "Hey, are you ok?"}

"That's a stupid question." Shigaraki gripes.

{The kid rolled his eyes. "Just peachy."

"Oh, I, uh, I have a first aid kit!" Izuku swung his bag off his shoulder and started digging through it. "I have badges and burn cream and…"

"Don't bother. I have my own."}

"Why am I surprised?" Aizawa complained.

"I'll be adding Shinsou to the list of students for evaluation." Hound Dog informs.

{The kid was already kneeling next to his own backpack and within a second he'd pulled out a first aid kit just as intense as

Izuku's, “So, you're obviously pretty beat up too. What do they hate you for?”}

"Well that was blunt." Sato comments.

{“Oh,” Izuku's face fell, “I'm, uh, I'm quirkless…”

All of a sudden, Izuku's brain felt fuzzy and his arms fell limply at his sides, his fingers barely managing to hang onto the strap of his backpack. The kid refused to look at him as he started bandaging his bruises, “Go away.”

Izuku couldn't say he was very surprised when his body started obeying on its own. Brainwashing would explain why the other kids were calling him a villain and why they were covering his mouth since it seemed to activate with a question. That was such a cool quirk! He really hoped that kid ignored his bullies and tried for UA anyway because he would be able to save so many people someday!}

"Wha...?" Shinsou stares at the screen in disbelief.

{It took a few blocks to qualify as away enough for the quirk to deactivate, and the moment he had his brain back, Izuku sighed in defeat. There was no point in turning around and trying to find the kid again, he was probably long gone by now, but Izuku had ended up wandering in the direction of the other villain fight, so he might as well stop by there now. It didn't take him long at all to find the crowd, but instead of catching the tail end of the cleanup, the fight was still going on. That must be one strong villain!}

"No we just didn't know what to do." Mt. Lady sighs.

{“How long has that kid been in there?”

“I dunno, but if he's still alive, he hasn't got long.”

The villain had a hostage? What was the villain's quirk? Was it something with fire or...Izuku finally elbowed his way through enough of the crowd to be able to see the villain and he gasped. The sludge villain must have escaped the bottles that All Might shoved him in!

This was his fault. If he hadn't grabbed onto All Might, he wouldn't have dropped the bottles and even if for some reason he

had, then he would have still had just enough time left to recapture him! Izuku cursed himself and pushed a little closer. Was the hostage even still alive? Izuku had felt like he was going to die after only a few seconds!}

"Attention Hellions," Aizawa called out "I can't believe I have to say this but, plastic bottles are *not* appropriate restraints or transport."

{The hostage was struggling weakly at this point, but considering all the fires the heroes were fighting, he must have some sort of fire quirk. Izuku leaned forward as he saw a tiny bit of flame burst from one of the victim's hands...no! It was an explosion!

"Kacchan!" Izuku yelled and almost started running before he caught himself. That kid earlier was right. If he went out there right now, he'd just be an extra victim for the heroes to save, but...there had to be something he could do! All Might wasn't coming, he was all out of energy for the day, but...well, actually the villain didn't know that, did he?}

"What does that matter?" Iida asks.

{In spite of himself, Izuku smiled. The sludge villain was terrified of All Might, just like those bullies had been scared of him when he'd hidden behind the dumpster...well, more scared of the *idea* of him, but still...They'd given up rather than risk fighting against an enemy they couldn't beat.}

"Is he going to do what I think he is?" Mic asks turning to see the smile ever so slowly spreading across his friend's face.

{A half-baked plan already in mind, Izuku took a big breath and yelled at the top of his lungs, "All Might's at a fight just down the street! He'll be here any minute!"}

"Is he planning to *bluff* the slime dude away?" Kaminari asks.

"Hell yeah!" Ashido cheers.

{The crowd started chanting All Might's name and the villain instantly tensed, torn between taking over his hostage, who wouldn't be a very good disguise at this point, and making a run for it. Izuku elbowed his way to the very front of the crowd. He just needed to give one final push.

The villain was looking around frantically for All Might, so it

didn’t take long for his eyes to widen in recognition as he spotted Izuku in the crowd. Izuku gave his best, most confident smile as he called out, “Well? Do you really think you can escape the number one hero *again*? Really?”}

"Oh that's gonna fuck with his head." Dabi smirks.

{The villain hesitated for one final second before expelling Kacchan onto the pavement with a squelch and making a run for it. The heroes rushed him instantly, no longer having to avoid hurting Kacchan or risk getting caught in one of his explosions and it didn’t take long before the sludge villain was once again in custody.

Izuku weaved his way back through the crowd before Kacchan could see him and made his way home deep in thought. He’d asked All Might if a quirkless kid could be a hero like him, and the answer he got was true. Izuku would never be like All Might, he wouldn’t be able to bring hope the way the symbol of peace was, but...he thought back to the way the bullies and the villain had run away.

Maybe he could be another kind of hero instead.}

"I'm going to enjoy this one." Aizawa claims with his trademark logical ruse grin. His colleagues chuckle and shiver at his intensity, both dreading and thoroughly enjoying the normally bored and tired friend. It doesn't take long for the crowd to calm down for the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Midoriya's Matchmaking

D?ITHSP... Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Midoriyas' Matchmaking service

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Similarities

{Inko Midoriya had insisted on having Eraserhead, Ms. Joke, Mr. Brave, and Sir Nighteye all over for dinner before the planned raid next week. Shouta didn't see the necessity of it, but she'd insisted she would be able to spend time with the heroes who were responsible for bringing her son home alive and he hadn't been able to say no. It shouldn't be too painful, right?}

Midoriya snorts "Famous last words."

{"Oh dear," Midoriya-san said with a mischievous glint in her eye, "I do believe I've forgotten a few key ingredients for the desert. Aizawa-san, Fukukado-san, would you mind running to the store and picking them up?"

Nevermind. Shouta caught Deku smirking out of the corner of his eye and turned to glare at him, to which Deku responded by pasting an innocent look on his face, an effect which was totally ruined by the way his mouth twitched at the corners. Traitor.}

Uraraka gasped "*Deku*."

"You aren't going to do this to any of *us* are you?" Iida asks suddenly wary of his friend. He doesn't like that Midoriya only chuckles and waves him off.

<

{“Of course, Midoriya-san! We’d love to!” Fukukado said gleefully, “Come on Eraser, let’s go shopping like an old married couple.”

“The sooner we leave, the sooner we can get back.” Shouta said sullenly.

“Have fun you two!” Nakamura was trying not to laugh but was failing miserably. Even Sasaki was smiling. Shouta sighed, how was this his life?}

Aizawa is glaring at the screen while his colleagues and coworkers try and fail to not laugh at the man.

{Deku gave them a list and Shouta rolled his eyes as they left. Yep, the problem child was definitely in on it.

“So Eraser,” Fukukado grabbed his arm as she walked, “Are you excited for your new class this year?”

Shouta hoped nobody mistook them for a couple, though he didn’t think anyone would, if only because of their different fashion sense. He was wearing a black shirt and bright pink sweatpants while she was wearing a white and blue striped romper with flowing sleeves. He thought it looked rather good on her, but he wasn’t going to say that out loud. Honestly, Shouta didn’t know how she thought this relationship would work when they were obviously so different. A relationship with her would take him so far out of his comfort zone that it wouldn’t even be funny.}

"Denial." Ashido and Hagakure say in unison.

"Are we just gonna ignore sensei wearing hot pink sweatpants?" Sato asks.

"Well I don't want to bring it up with him." Ojirou comments

{“I don’t know.” He stepped around a puddle. “Most of them have powerful quirks, but you know that’s no guarantee of success in the hero industry.”

She nodded, “Yeah, I’ve had a lot of students over the years who think being a hero will be easy just because they can shoot fire or bend metal with their minds. If that was all it took to succeed as a hero, the licensing exam would have a *much* higher pass rate.”

She sighed. “I may not be as trigger-happy with expulsions as you are, Eraser, but I do try to get in through my students’ heads that heroism isn’t just sunshine and rainbows like they’ve been taught to believe.”}

"We had to learn that the hard way." Shoji remarks.

{“That’s why I always threaten expulsion on the first day.” Shouta said. “Even when I don’t end up expelling anyone, that threat stays with them. Whenever they’re tempted to think they already know what the hero industry is, they’ll remember that the first day of hero school was nothing like they expected.”}

"Ain't that the truth." Jiro huffs.

{“Maybe it’s because we’re underground heroes,” Fukukado jumped over a crack in the sidewalk and Shouta rolled his eyes, “but I feel like we’ve got a unique perspective about what heroism is outside of fame and calling out special moves. It’s dangerous and difficult and you can’t save everyone.” She frowned. “Sometimes I wish the students understood that. As it is, it’s always a shock the first time they encounter actual danger or watch someone die in front of them. It’s something they have to experience to really understand, just telling them won’t cut it.”}

"Which we learned at the camp." Kendo says solemnly "And you still antagonize 1A even after that." she scolds Monoma.

{Shouta thought back to his friends, one of them dying on an internship before he ever had the chance to become a real hero, “I didn’t understand either, at first…”

Fukukado brought both hands up to her mouth, “Oh, Eraser! I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean to…”

He shook his head. “It’s ok. It’s a part of what made me the hero and teacher I am today.” He thought for a moment, “It’s difficult because I still miss him, but it’s not like it’s something I can’t talk about.”}

"This is a very dangerous career we are pursuing." Iida says clenching his fists; his friends quietly comfort him, whispering to Mei he assumes telling her what happened, he's thankful she doesn't push for details right now.

{She looked at him softly, “Still, I’m sorry for bringing up bad

memories. Do you want to hear a joke instead?"

He glared at her as she grinned, "What do you call a fake noodle?"

"I really don't care."

"An im- *pasta*! Get it Eraser?" She laughed and grabbed his arm to pull him into the store they'd finally arrived at.

Shouta sighed heavily, but turned away to hide a hint of a smile, "Why did you even decide to go the underground route, anyway? With your loud personality, you could've easily been a daylight hero. Maybe you could've even had a side job as a comedian like Mic does as a radio host. It fits your quirk well enough."}

"My most commonly asked question." Joke snorts.

{"Hmm," Fukukado looked up from the shopping list she'd been studying, "I was always told I'd be a good comedian, but to me saving people was more important. I didn't want to be a hero to be famous, because if I was worrying about how to be famous, I wouldn't be worrying about how to be the best hero I can be."

Shouta hadn't been expecting that answer. If anything, he'd been expecting her to make a joke about it and move on, not give him a genuine answer stemming from her beliefs about fame and heroism. Maybe they weren't so different after all…}

"It's happening." Ashido whispers happily.

{"Me too." He said awkwardly, "Mic always makes fun of me and says I chose to be underground because I hate the media, which is definitely true," he cut off Fukukado who'd been about to tease him, "but it was more because I didn't want to deal with having to constantly watch how I was portraying myself when all I really wanted to do was save people."

"Well, Eraser," Fukukado said as she punched him lightly in the arm, "I think you're doing a pretty good job so far."

"Yeah, yeah," Shouta rolled his eyes, "Now what were we supposed to buy?"

He couldn't help watching Fukukado as she found everything on the list. He hadn't known she was capable of taking things

seriously. Her attitude had always made him think that everything was a joke to her, the same mindset that had made him expel many of his students, but here she was proving him wrong. She laughed, apparently, because she chose to, not because she didn't understand that people's lives were at stake every time she put on her hero costume. Shouta had known her for almost as long as he'd been a hero, but...it was starting to seem like he really hadn't known her at all.}

"Everyone is their own personal main character writing the story of their life with decisions and reactions, here is simply one such example." Tokoyami agrees.

{Shouta wasn't quite sure how to feel about that.}

{"They've been gone for a while…" Izuku said nervously, "You don't think they ran into trouble, do you?"

"Well, there's two options here," Nakamura said as he helped chop vegetables, "either Eraser killed Joke and is now hiding the body, or," he slammed the knife down on the table, making everyone jump, "she killed him."}

Joke gasped dramatically "Why, I would *never*."

{"I'd prefer if she killed him, the world needs all the laughter it can get," Sasaki sighed, "but unfortunately I think the other possibility is much more likely."}

"Marai!" Yagi gasped in shock.

{"Oh don't be so depressing!" Inko said. "Maybe they realized they're both madly in love with each other and ran off to Tokyo to get married."}

"I like her." Joke chuckles.

{"And didn't invite us?" Nakamura put his hand to his chest in mock betrayal, "I thought I was going to be the best man!"}

"Dibs!" Mic claims.

"I'm not getting married!" Aizawa growls.

"Yet." Midnight teases.

{Izuku laughed, “Yeah, right, you’re more like the drunk uncle who gives an embarrassing toast.”

“Shut up! Like you wouldn’t be the ring bearer!”

“Actually,” Inko said with a smile, “I’m pretty sure he’d be the flower girl.”}

"MOM!" Izuku screeches much to the amusement of just about everyone.

{“Mom!” Izuku yelped. Sasaki chuckled while Nakamura bent over in laughter and Izuku glared at them. “Nevermind. Everyone out! You’re all corrupting my mother.”}

"Operation: corrupt a Midoriya is a go!" Uraraka cheers to Izuku's dismay.

{Just then the door opened, “Hey, what’s everyone laughing about? Don’t tell me I missed an awesome joke!”

“Don’t worry, Joke,” Nakamura yelled, “It was just Midoriya-san laying out a sick burn!”

Fukukado had a pout on her face when she entered the kitchen, “No fair!”

Aizawa entered, “Just as long as she’s not burning dinner.”}

Snort
Cough
"Ha!"
"Sensei!"
"Oh my god!"
"Did he just...?"
"The fuck!"

{Everyone stopped and stared at him for a moment before Fukukado’s face split into a wide grin, “I didn’t know you had a sense of humor, Eraser.”

He raised an eyebrow, “If you didn’t then you’ve obviously never heard of my logical ruses.”}

"Wrong kind of humor!" Kaminari grins.

{“I think she meant a sense of humor that other people would

find funny.” Sasaki said blandly, causing everyone to burst out laughing again while Aizawa scowled.}

"Burn." Dabi snarks then scowls when Toga burst out laughing "What?" she laughs harder.

{During dinner, Inko quizzed each of the heroes on what they were going to do to keep Izuku safe. Izuku wanted to tell her she didn’t have to worry, he was getting really good at combat and each of the heroes had constantly drilled into his head the importance of hanging back and observing so that he wasn’t about to recklessly run into a fight. But at the same time, his mom was letting him do this, despite the fact that it was hard for her, so she deserved to know that he was going to be well protected.}

"You jinxed it." Todoroki deadpans.

Izuku sighs "Yeah, probably."

{Once everyone had been stuffed to Inko’s satisfaction, Izuku grabbed his duffle bag from his room. They’d decided it was easier for him to just leave with Eraserhead for his final internship, considering it was officially starting tomorrow. Inko stood by the door with tears in her eyes and scooped Izuku up into a big hug.

“Come home safe, ok?” Her voice shook as she hugged him tighter. “I love you.”

Izuku nodded and hugged her back as he started crying too, “I’ll be ok, Mom, I promise. I’ll show those villains who’s boss without doing anything stupid, ok?”

Inko sniffed and looked at her son proudly, “I’m glad you’ve found what makes you happy, Izuku.” She then turned to Aizawa. “I’m trusting you to bring him home safe.”

Aizawa nodded solemnly, “I care about your son and I would never let anything happen to him. Not if I can help it.”}

"He admits it!" cheers many of 1A

{Aizawa’s eyes widened as Inko launched forward and wrapped her arms around his waist. He looked helplessly at the other heroes, who were watching in amusement as he struggled to know what to do with his hands. Eventually, he settled on lightly

patting Inko on the back, “Ok, um, we should probably get going.”

Inko pulled back with a shaky smile, “Good luck!”

Izuku followed his friends out the door with a smile. He was finally going to be a hero.}

"Aw come on, I want to see the raid." Hagakure whines.

"I know honey," Headcase comforts "but first you should see how Mastermind's world is handling the death of..."

"Right!" Izuku interrupts "No reason to dwell, let's get this over with."

"Of course." Headcase says in understanding, turning to start the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Successor

MM:SFH Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Successor

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Aftermath

{Thousands showed up for the funeral of the Symbol of Peace. Tsukauchi stood stoically next to Sir Nighteye as Gran Torino stood at the podium to give the eulogy.

“I’ve known All Might since before he was the symbol of peace. Back then, he was just a kid with a dream. We thought he was crazy, thinking that he could decrease crime just by being visible, by being a symbol, but I guess he was just crazy enough to pull it off. All Might dedicated his life to protecting people, and now he’s dedicated his death too. The villains were after *him*, make no mistake, but All Might did his darnedest to make sure that none of those kids were hurt and he succeeded. This is his legacy: wherever All Might was, people were safe. He made the world safer just by being there and by being himself. He’ll be missed, that’s for sure, and the world won’t be the same without him, but if I know anything about All Might, I know that he wouldn’t want us to lose hope. He’d want us to keep going, keep fighting and keep protecting those in need. Thank you, All Might, and Goodbye.”}

"That's a wonderful speech, my old friend." All Might says to his old teacher.

"Of course, I'm the one who wrote." Torino snarked. "Just don't go making me write one back home."

{Gran Torino went to stand back by Tsukauchi, wiping his eyes surreptitiously. The three walked over to the casket along with several other heroes, taking up their places as Pallbearers. They had managed to keep the existence of All Might's skeletal form out of the media, so the casket was much larger than it probably needed to be. Tsukauchi had caught a glimpse before they'd closed it. Toshinori had looked so small, dwarfed by his own casket, by his own legacy.}

Sniffles and quiet sobs start-up, the pain briefly forgotten in the enjoyment of the other chapters returning with force. Some are on their second box of tissues, and others stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the need.

{He thought people were supposed to look peaceful in death, but all Tsukauchi could think of was the agony and despair that his friend had felt in his final moments as Mastermind slid a dagger between his ribs. Mastermind, who Tsukauchi was supposed to have caught. If he had just been a little faster on that first raid or realized that the villain existed sooner, or managed to track him down before he started showing his face, then maybe, just *maybe*, his friend would still be beside him, laughing until he coughed up blood, rather than lying in a box that really was too big for him.}

"You can't do this to yourself." Yagi sighs.

"Easier said than done." Tsukauchi huffs leaning into the hand his friend places on his shoulder.

{They lowered him into the ground and Tsukauchi couldn't take it anymore. He tried not to run, but walked quickly away from the graveside, not stopping until he reached the relative privacy of the bathroom. He burst into tears and didn't even try to hold them back as he thought of his friend, not All Might, not the symbol of peace, but his *friend* murdered in cold blood because he couldn't do his job as a fucking cop and catch the guy!}

"No, no, this isn't your fault, it's not, we promise." Ashido begs through her tears.

{He buried his head in his hands and collapsed onto the dirty cement floor, not even caring that he'll have to dry clean his suit after this. He'd been sobbing for a few minutes when he felt arms around him and looked up. He could barely see Gran Torino through his tears, but the old pro was kneeling beside him,

whispering to him to breathe and that everything was going to be alright.}

"But it will never be the same." Aizawa rumbles.

"But it *will* be alright." Mic comforts.

{“It’s not your fault, Tsukauchi. There wasn’t anything you could have done to prevent it.”

“I-I could have!” Tsukauchi sobbed, “I could have caught him! I could have ignored the stupid hostage situation and put the bastard in Tartarus so he couldn’t fucking hurt anyone else! I could have..”

“Stop that!” Gran Torino hit him on the head with his cane, “If you’d ignored the hostage situation, there’d be a lot more people dead and there was still a chance Toshinori would be dead. Mastermind knew his weaknesses. He knew about his injury. *He knew about his time limit*. No matter what anyone did, Mastermind was always going to kill Toshinori eventually. And the guilt for that rests solely on the bastard that held the knife, not on me or you or *anyone else*. Do you hear me?”}

"Damnit!"
"Fuck!"
"Why!?"
Sob

{“But…”

“No! Gran Torino’s right.” The two looked up to see that Sir Nighteye had joined them, “If we were to assign blame on your criteria, I would be just as guilty as you. I was the one who told him to go to UA and find a successor. If I hadn’t pushed him like that, he would never have been there and those villains would never have come! But if we lose ourselves in blame, we will be paralyzed with doubt and fear, and *then we will never be able to catch the man who killed our friend*. And I won’t let that happen.”}

"Marai." Toshinori sighs sadly.

{The other two looked at him in shock, surprised by the ferocity of his declaration. Sir Nighteye had tears streaming silently down his face now and his hands were clenched at his sides. Suddenly, Gran Torino reached forward and pulled Nighteye down onto the

floor, wrapping his arms around him.

“It’ll be alright… even if he’s not here...it has to be alright...”

The three didn’t know how long they stayed there, sobbing on the floor and holding onto each other for dear life, but by the time they left, the crowds had already dispersed, the news crews were gone, and the gravediggers were already filling the hole with dirt. They each went their separate ways and Gran Torino waved to the others as they left before turning to face the grave one last time.

“We’ll catch the guy that did this Toshinori.” He whispered. “We have to.”}

"I know you will." All Might says solemnly.

{“So, I need to be completely honest with you.” Nedzu sat solemnly at the head of the table. The staff of UA had gathered together for a meeting on how to move forward after All Might’s death. Thirteen was wrapped in bandages and Aizawa still had a thick piece of gauze taped under his eye, both physical reminders of what had happened. At least the media wasn’t blaming them for All Might’s death. If anything, they were being praised for how well they protected the students against a hoard of unbeatable villains.}

"Small victories." Nedzu's clipped response barely conceals his displeasure.

{“The league of villains only came to UA because All Might was here.” Nedzu continued, “He was the ultimate goal and his presence put the students in danger, and for that, I am truly sorry.”

“Why did you think it was a good idea for him to teach here anyway? He didn’t even have teaching credentials and…” Aizawa huffed angrily, “Those villains put our students through hell. They had to learn too early that not every villain can be beaten. They had to watch the symbol of peace die. That’s not something we can erase from their minds, it’s something that will stay with them forever. And it only happened because All Might was here.”}

"Sensei." Izuku whispers sadly, a little guilty that All Might was at UA

for him.

"Don't do that." Uraraka commands, startling Izuku into looking her in the eye "He chose to join UA before he chose you, so don't you dare blame yourself for the USJ." Izuku chokes back a sob as his friend squeezes him in a tight hug.

{“At the time, I believed the students could learn something from him. He was also unwilling to step down as the symbol of peace, so a teaching job gave him an excuse to step out of the spotlight for a time and respect his time limit. But the main reason I invited him to teach at UA was because of his quirk.”}

"Wait. why is he telling everybody about that?" Hagakure questions, still sad and now very confused.

{Nedzu looked around the table at the confused faces of his staff and took a deep breath before continuing, “All Might’s quirk was unique in many senses of the word. It was called One for All and had an aspect that allowed it to be physically transferred to another person.” Nedzu ignored the shocked looks and whispers, “He came to UA to find a suitable successor for his quirk. I thought I could point him to some of our students that have been doing well and he could groom them to become the next symbol of peace.”}

"Groom them?" Aizawa immediately picks up on the red flag.

"That's not right." All Might comments.

"Midoriya isn't Yagi's second coming, but his own person." Nedzu reasons.

{“So…” Midnight spoke up, “Are you telling us that one of our students has All Might’s quirk now?”

Nezu looked up at her, “No. That’s just the thing. He had spent the year so far looking at several students but had not yet made a decision at the time of his death. I normally wouldn’t have dreamed of telling you this secret, but it doesn’t matter anymore. All Might was not able to pass it on and his quirk died when he did.”}

"What!?"
"Oh no!"
"That's bad!"

"So, so bad!"

"Wait!" Izuku calls out standing and staring Headcase down "Mirio-senpai has One for All in Deku so I thought he'd have it in the other, but that wouldn't be very entertaining." Headcase's grin widens with mischief "Each of these stories has a different holder don't they?"

She chuckles a bit before answering "Clouds has never liked repetition." and that just confirms it.

> {“So why are you telling us,” Aizawa asked, “If he didn’t pass it on, it’s a moot point and we don’t need to know.”
>
> Nedzu sighed, “I wish it were that simple. You see, One for All has a... a brother quirk, of sorts, called All for One. The villain with this quirk can steal the quirks of others, which he has used to give himself a supernaturally long lifespan. We believe he died in a confrontation with All Might several years ago, but his body was never recovered and there is a possibility, however slight, that he survived. Until now, the only people strong enough to keep All for One in check have been the holders of One for All.”}

Shigaraki is cackling maniacally and the heroes and students lean away from him.

> {There was a pause as everyone digested Nedzu’s words and their implications. When it finally sunk in, the teachers stared at the principal in horror.
>
> “Now that One for All is gone,” Nedzu whispered, “I do not know if there is anyone alive strong enough to defeat All for One.”
>
> “Will he come after the students?” Mic asked quickly.
>
> “I don’t know.” Nedzu replied. “With All Might gone, he shouldn’t have any reason to, but there is always the possibility that he does not know that All Might never passed on his quirk and he will look for the successor among our student body.”
>
> “How will we protect the students?” Snipe asked.
>
> Nedzu stared off into the distance, “I don’t know,” he said softly, “I don’t know.”}

"What!?"
"No!"

”Damnit!"
"We might be targeted!"
"Don't stop there!"
The room is a cacophony of grief and fear that takes some time to calm. When they do Headcase starts the next chapter with a wince.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: The arm

V:TGG Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

The Arm

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Bullies

{A kick to Izuku's shin woke him up. Had he fallen asleep in class again? He'd been getting a lot less sleep since he started going out as a vigilante, which of course led to him getting more tired during the day, but it only got worse now that he had a still-healing concussion. His teachers didn't seem to care enough about Izuku to notice when he fell asleep in class, but his peers were apparently a different story. He looked up to see a few students crowded around his desk, but most of the class, including Kacchan, had already left for lunch.}

"Just leave him alone." Mina whines still sniffling a little.

{"What's the matter Deku?" That was the kid with extendable eyeballs that hung around Kacchan sometimes. "Busy night whoring yourself out or something?"}

Izuku turns toward Katsuki "Kacchan, you can't be a hero from prison!"

"He crossed a line Deku." Katsuki snarls back.

"Not in our world." Izuku defends.

"I don't believe you." Katsuki snaps back.

Izuku just sighs and turns back to the screen.

{“No.” A kid with a minor glow quirk said. “Deku’s too useless even for that!”}

"I don't know what's more insulting anymore." Izuku murmurs.

{Eyeballs laughed, “You’re right. Just do everyone a favor, Deku, and die. Leave some oxygen for the people who actually deserve to breathe.”}

"Like you?" Jiro snarks.

"Jiro." Momo scolds.

"I know! I know, it's just..." she sighs trailing off.

"I know." Momo assures.

{Izuku stared at the floor and tried to ignore them as he gathered his books and stood to go to lunch. He was already halfway through the day, he could get through this. It was only another few hours. He made it all the way to the hall before his classmates started harassing him again.

“Hey Deku!” Eyeballs growled. “Are you ignoring us?”

Izuku ran down the hall as fast as he could. If he could get to the lunchroom, then hopefully his classmates would get distracted by the promise of food and even if they weren’t, the beatings tended to be a little better if there were a lot of people around. Unfortunately, in his haste to get away, Izuku forgot to watch where he was going and ran straight into the kid in his class whose hair was made of boulders.}

Both Katsuki and Izuku stiffen at that.

{“Watch it, Deku!” Boulders said.}

"Fuck!" Bakugo barks.

{“I-I’m sorry!” Izuku stuttered. “I-I wasn’t looking where I was going and I just want to go to lunch, so….”

He tried to duck around him, but Boulders put a large hand on his shoulder and shoved him back before he could, “Do you think you can just run into me and not face any consequences?”}

"Of course he'd run into the one kid that made Kacchan look like a

pacifist." Izuku groans.

"Excuse me!" Mei shrieks.

{Izuku started shaking and turned around. If he could run before the other two caught up then he might be able to take a different route to the lunchroom and…

“There you are, Deku!” Eyeballs leered at him as he and Glow cut off his path of escape. Izuku glanced behind him, only to see Boulders standing threateningly behind him.

“Were you guys looking for this nerd?” Boulders asked.}

"This is going to be bad." Bakugo huffs.

{“Deku here thinks he can ignore us.” Glow said.

“Yeah.” Eyeballs leaned into Izuku’s personal space. “He thinks he’s better than us.”

Izuku shrank, “N-no, that’s n-not it at all! I j-just really think we should be getting to lunch…”

“No,” Boulders turned both fists into rocks and slammed Izuku up against the wall, “I think maybe we should teach this quirkless loser a lesson first.”}

"Stop!"
"Stay away from him!"
"Back off!"

{Inko rushed to the school in a panic, almost forgetting her purse at work in her hurry to get to Izuku. The woman on the phone hadn’t said much, just that Izuku had gotten into a fight at school and that she needed to come to pick him up. A fight? Her baby didn’t get into fights! He watched them, he analyzed them, but he didn’t get into them!}

"I know he probably just got his ass handed to him by bullies, but I just can't help thinking about what she'd think about the vigilante thing." Monoma comments.

"That's fair." Kendo concedes.

{What had happened? What if Izuku was hurt? What if he…Inko

shook her head. No, she couldn't let her anxiety get the best of her right now. Izuku needed her. She needed to be calm for Izuku.

When she finally reached the school, she hurried through the front doors and followed the signs to the front office, "Excuse me? I got a call from you about my son, Izuku?"

"Mrs. Midoriya?" The secretary asked. Inko recognized her voice as the one who had called her telling her to come in. Inko nodded and the secretary gestured to a door off to one side of the office. "The principal is already waiting for you. Go right in."

"Thank you!" Inko rushed through the door but stopped and put her hand over her mouth when she caught sight of Izuku. "Oh, baby!"

Izuku was huddling in a chair across from the angry-looking principal. His uniform was torn and would definitely need to be replaced, but that wasn't what brought tears to Inko's eyes. No, what brought tears to her eyes was the mottled collection of new bruises covering her son's face and neck. From the way the bruises dipped below his collar, Inko had no doubt that his arms and torso were in a similar state. What had happened?}

Silence

{"Mrs. Midoriya, you're here. Good." The principal gestured for her to take the chair beside Izuku. "Now that you've finally arrived, we can discuss Izuku's punishment."}

"Did I hear that right?" Mic asks scandalized.

"He's going to punish Midoriya for being attacked." Midnight growled.

{"Punishment!?" Inko looked between the principal and Izuku, who seemed to be trying to make himself small enough to disappear with no luck. "You haven't even told me what this is about?"

"As my secretary explained over the phone, Izuku instigated a fight."

"A fight!?" Inko looked at the principal incredulously. "Look at the state of my son! That wasn't a fight, it was a beating!"}

"You tell 'im Mamadoriya!" Kaminari cries.

{The principal's mouth tightened into a stern frown. "He attacked a number of his classmates unprovoked and forced them to take defensive action. As I'm sure you are aware, Mrs. Midoriya, our school has a zero-tolerance policy toward fighting and as such, I am suspending Izuku for two weeks."

"S-suspension?" Inko shook her head. "What about the other students? Are they being suspended too for what they did to my son?"

The principal glared at Izuku, then at her, "We are not in the habit of punishing victims for defending themselves, Mrs. Midoriya. Your son was the one who started the fight, so he's the one who will receive punishment."}

"Fucking bullshit~" Ashido sings.

"Fucking bullshit~" Kaminari joins in.

{"What?!" Inko couldn't help raising her voice. "But my son *didn't* start that fight, I know Izuku, he wouldn't do that. Those other children..."

"If you have a problem with the way I run my school, Mrs. Midoriya," the principal interrupted, "then perhaps you should find a different one."}

"That's the first smart thing that bastard has said all day." Aizawa growls.

{Inko stared at him in disbelief, "What?"

"That will be all Mrs. Midoriya." The principal turned back to the papers on his desk. "Izuku will not be allowed back in school for the next two weeks. If he shows up on campus you will have to come to pick him up and if it happens again, we will have no choice but to pursue legal action. Have a nice day."}

"Okay yeah, I'm burning down that school." Dabi growls.

"Yay!" Toga cheers "I'll bring the marshmallows."

{For the first time, Inko realized that the principal hadn't once tried to ask her son for his side of the story or even allowed him to defend himself since she'd arrived. There was always the possibility that he'd given Izuku that chance before she'd gotten

to the school, but with the way the conversation had gone, Inko didn't think that was very likely. She'd been called here so the principal could execute punishment, not to resolve the situation or figure out what really happened.}

"And that man is allowed to educate children." Endeavor huffs.

{Izuku didn't look up as they left and started walking toward the train station. What had been happening at that school? What had Izuku been going through? She knew that there had been a few problems with some kids being mean to him right after he was diagnosed quirkless, but he'd always told her so they could report the issue, and then he'd said they stopped. Unless...

"It never actually stopped. Did it?"}

"No, it didn't." Izuku whispers.

{Inko watched as Izuku froze, then seemed to physically force himself to keep walking. Her poor baby, he'd been going through all this alone for years! Why didn't he tell her? They were all each other had! He should have told her, she could have…

Could have what? Gone to the principal? A fat lot of good that would've done. What could she have even done, if she had known?

"I'm not mad at you, Izuku." She said quietly. "I'm sad that you felt like you couldn't tell me, but I understand why you didn't. You can be honest with me, baby. The bullying didn't stop, did it?"

Izuku swallowed, then shook his head and Inko felt her heart break. Her baby was never this quiet. What had those boys been doing to him to force Izuku, who could hardly think without mumbling, to go completely silent? She wanted to...well, it probably wasn't very healthy to want to hurt children. But they had hurt Izuku. They deserved it.}

"Agreed." Todoroki deadpans.

{"Thank you for telling me, baby." Inko said. "I'm here. I don't know what we're gonna do, because the school obviously isn't going to be any help, but we'll get through this together, okay?"

Izuku looked up at her and smiled shakily, then winced as they

started going down the stairs to the station. Inko frowned and looked at her son a little more closely. Sure, that wince could have been from any one of his numerous bruises, but...had he been cradling his left arm like that the whole time? How had she not noticed that? Well, she'd probably been distracted by the bruises and the jerk that called himself the principal, so she couldn't blame herself, but from the way he was holding it, his arm had to be in a lot of pain.}

"He is far too good at hiding his injuries." Recovery Girl sighs.

{"Izuku, what's the matter with your arm?"

Izuku froze and looked up at her with scared wide eyes before forcing a smile onto his face, "It's nothing, Mom. Don't worry about it."

Inko frowned. The first words her son had spoken to her since this whole mess began, and he was trying to convince her that everything was fine. He obviously wasn't fine, "It's not nothing, Izuku, you look like you're in pain. Let me see it."

Izuku shook his head and tried to rush ahead further into the station. Inko didn't know what possessed her to grab his injured arm to hold him back.

"Ow!" Izuku screamed and snatched his arm away from her, the tears he'd been holding back falling freely down his cheeks.}

"It might seem harsh but sometimes you must force the issue to help a child." Hound Dog assures.

{Inko held up her hands calmingly, "Izuku, baby, you're hurt, just let me look at it."

He hesitated a long moment before extending the arm out to her and looking away in embarrassment. She gently rolled up the sleeve and gasped. The whole arm was turning an ugly shade of purple and Inko really hoped she was imagining the strange way it seemed to bend now that Izuku wasn't holding it against his body.}

"They broke his arm!?" someone shouts no one can tell who, too busy glaring at the screen and seething in their seats.

{"Izuku, we're going to the hospital."

Izuku snatched his arm back again and rolled down the sleeve, “Mom, I don’t need…”

She shot him a look that shut him up, “Izuku, from the looks of it, that arm might be broken. You need to go to the hospital.”

Izuku went silent again as they switched directions and got on the train that would take them to the hospital, rather than taking them home. Inko didn’t like her son going silent like this, but it was preferable to him lying and insisting he was fine when he obviously wasn’t. What were they going to do?}

"Hopefully take him out of that school." Aizawa grumbles, looking over his less-than-happy students. They're taking this personally and so is he. At least in the next chapter, they'll probably get some of that analysis they're so excited for.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: An extra credit project

CC:SS Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

An extra credit project

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Discovery

{Once Izuku gained access to the system, he spent some time familiarizing himself with the system, making sure he knew how to pan between the different cameras and could figure out which cameras covered which areas of campus. Once he was comfortable with that, he grabbed an empty notebook from the shelf and started debating the best way to start his project. The only problem was that the first years...hadn't really done anything yet. Yesterday had just been the entrance ceremony and Eraserhead hazing his class, whatever that meant, but they wouldn't start combat exercises until that afternoon at the very least, so what was he supposed to do until then?}

"The entrance exam?" Jiro suggested.

{Izuku thought for a moment before looking through the archives to see if he could find the entrance exam. Whatever it had consisted of, it was apparently a good enough demonstration of each student's quirk and combat ability to determine their qualification for the hero course, so if it was good enough for UA, it should be good enough for him. It was somewhere to start, at least.}

"Good, good, start from the beginning." Nedzu agrees.

{Thankfully, Izuku found the footage he needed quickly, along

with a list of the examinees by area. On instinct, he scanned until he found Katsuki's name. Testing area C. Izuku bit his lip. He didn't actually need to see Katsuki's exam, he knew his quirk well enough from a lifetime of experience to be able to analyze it in his sleep, but a part of him needed to know if Katsuki really was as strong as he'd always bragged.}

"That would be the first time Kacchan could *really* go all out." Izuku says a little excited despite the circumstances.

{Before he could second guess himself, Izuku opened the footage from Katsuki's area. The minute that people started moving, Katsuki blasted ahead of the other examinees and went to town, leaving a trail of robot parts in his wake. Izuku felt a surge of anger, couldn't he at least leave some of the robots for other people? No, that would require him to think about other people for once in his life, wouldn't it?}

"Oh, shit!"
"*Damn!*"
"Wasn't expecting him to be so sassy like that."

{As he watched Katsuki destroy robot after robot, Izuku couldn't help but feel grateful that he hadn't tried for the hero course. As much as he hated to admit it, he really wouldn't have stood a chance against robots like that. They weren't the kind of opponents that he would have been able to beat simply by analyzing them. He wouldn't have gotten a single point.}

"You could have gotten in through the sports festival." Shinsou huffs.

{Katsuki, however, didn't even blink as he destroyed robots left and right. The main issue that Izuku could see was his recklessness. True to form, Katsuki treated the other examinees like extras that weren't even there, resulting in several instances where someone could have been injured from either his explosions or the shrapnel and debris that went flying with the destruction of each robot. Izuku watched as Katsuki let loose a giant explosion less than a foot from another examinee's face, effectively stealing the three-pointer that he'd been about to destroy. The other examinees that he'd done something like that to had shrugged it off and found another robot far away from Katsuki's attack radius. This one, however, some kid with purple hair that seemed to defy gravity, got angry. Izuku grimaced, knowing what was about to happen as the kid yelled at Katsuki,

who wasn't going to let an insult like that stand.}

"Didn't seem too concerned about it at the time." Shinsou comments annoyed at having to relive the exam.

{To his surprise, however, Katsuki turned around and walked away, allowing the purple-haired kid to finish off the three-pointer that had been injured by Katsuki's attack. That couldn't be right. Katsuki would never have backed down like that even if All Might himself had been yelling at him, much less some extra that he didn't even know, so what had that kid said to get him to just...drop it?}

"He's going to love this." Izuku chuckles.

{"Is there audio on these cameras?" Izuku muttered to himself, looking at the files more closely. Even if there was, the noise from the fight would probably have drowned out the conversation, but Izuku had to try anyway. He had to know what that kid said.

As it turned out, the cameras *did* have audio, but when Izuku listened to the camera he'd been watching, all he could hear was metallic clanging and explosions as the students raced to destroy the robots. He almost gave up, but then he realized that for an exam like this, Nedzu probably would have gone through extra trouble to make sure that there weren't any blind spots. That meant that there might actually be a camera closer to where the two were fighting, just pointed in the wrong direction so that it had a different field of vision. Within a few minutes, Izuku had found a camera that was almost directly above the fight he wanted to listen to.}

"Sweet, we get to see what happened." Kaminari grins.

"Yeah, or Blasty can stop claiming he doesn't remember." Ashido teases.

"Think what you want Acid Trip." Bakugo scoffs.

{When he first opened the audio, he was worried that he still wouldn't be able to hear anything above the noise of the fight, but after a few seconds, he heard Katsuki's familiar voice. He could barely make it out above the din of combat, but Izuku could still understand what he was saying if he concentrated. He rewound the audio a few seconds until there was the sound of a loud explosion, most likely when Katsuki attacked the robot, and

then a voice he didn't recognize started yelling.

"You almost killed me!" That must be the purple-haired kid. "What do you think you're doing?"

Katsuki's answer was more like a growl, "Get out of my way, extra!"

"Forget about me and go find yourself another robot."

Izuku waited to hear Katsuki's response, but it didn't come. Izuku looked at the time signature on the audio and did a double-take when he realized that Katsuki had already stormed off to find another robot. He just...told him to go away and he actually did? That didn't sound like Katsuki at all!}

"Oh!" Izuku says in surprise "He didn't..."

"Spoilers." Headcase reminds him.

{Izuku facepalmed and laughed as he made the connection. He was an idiot, it must be the kid's quirk! There was no other way that Katsuki would have obeyed him. But what was his quirk? It would probably be in his file, assuming that Izuku had access to it. He navigated back to where the student files should be and entered his password, which actually worked! Information like the students' phone numbers and addresses were blocked out, but Izuku suspected that Nedzu intended that as a mental exercise more than anything else. He didn't need any of that right now, though, he needed quirks.

He cross-referenced the list of examinees in area c with the hero course students, only to come up empty. Confused, because someone who could get Katsuki to obey him was obviously extremely strong, Izuku widened his search to all first-year students.

Hitoshi Shinsou. Quirk: Brainwashing. The three-pointer Izuku had seen him take out was about half his points since his quirk wasn't naturally destructive, so he didn't have nearly enough points to get into the hero course, which Izuku honestly thought was a crime. Yeah, Shinsou couldn't compete with kids like Katsuki when it came to destroying robots, but his quirk would be so useful for hostage situations and overpowered villains that couldn't be beaten head-on! And his quirk most likely had a lot of room to grow, since he could obviously modify memories with a

simple command. Katsuki would have turned right around to explode him the minute Shinsou released his hold if he hadn't been commanded to forget about him. And since he could do that, there was a chance that he could train to be able to give more complicated commands and maybe interrogations, even though his file said he couldn't give any commands that required higher brain function. Yet.}

"Wow, greenie's got some ideas." Shinsou comments.

{Izuku grabbed the notebook he'd ended up scribbling his thoughts in, tearing out the first page that had the beginning of Katsuki's analysis on it, and headed out to the lab again. The other students were all busy at work again, though Mei did look up when she noticed him, probably expecting him to come over and talk to her. He could drop by her table on his way back, but that wasn't his goal right now.}

"What is your goal right now?" Mei questions rising to the excitement of her silently vibrating friend.

{He gripped his notebook a little tighter as he approached Powerloader's desk. Izuku felt bad about interrupting whatever their teacher was working on, but Powerloader *had* said that he was here to answer any questions they had about projects and said he wouldn't get in trouble for reporting bullying, so he probably wouldn't get in trouble for interrupting him either. Wait...maybe he was supposed to go through Nedzu instead because he was an analysis student?}

"I'm still your homeroom teacher." Maijima murmurs.

{"Izu-kun!" Mei's voice in his ear made him jump and he looked over to see her grinning at him. "What are you working on? Do you have a project you need approved? Are you gonna make a super cool analysis babies?"

Well, it was too late to go back into his room because Mei had already caught Powerloader's attention and he was now looking right at them. Izuku took a deep breath and reminded himself that teachers were supposed to help their students, and Powerloader wasn't like his old teachers, so he wasn't going to get mad. Probably.}

"I won't I promise." Maijima assures.

{“You said we could do extra credit projects, right?”

“Yep.” Powerloader leaned forward attentively, “Do you have one in mind?”

Izuku nodded and opened his notebook, “Shinsou Hitoshi. He’s a gen-ed student with a brainwashing quirk, but he originally applied to the hero course. I’d like to see if I can use my analysis to help him improve enough to get into the hero course at the sports festival.”}

"What!?" Shinsou sits forward in shock.

{“That’s a pretty tall order.” Powerloader said. “Do you know how rare it is for someone from another course to actually succeed in transferring that way?”

“The last one was Eraserhead when he was a student here.” Izuku said confidently. “But Shinsou has what it takes! His quirk is powerful, it’s just not any good against robots. Plus, this will be a good way to test if my analyses are useful! If I can help Shinsou improve, then I’ll know that my notes are actually helpful!”}

"This will be a grand test of his abilities." Nedzu chirps.

{“Hmm,” Powerloader thought for a minute, “As long as you won’t get too discouraged if he doesn’t end up transferring, then I don’t see any problem with it.”

“Ooh! Izu-Kun, you said he’s got a brainwashing quirk?” Mei grinned manically. “I could make so many babies for him! Powerloader! If I make some babies, could he use them in the sports festival?”

“He’s a gen-ed student?” Powerloader asked. “He should be able to bring a single support item, but it’ll need to be approved by Nedzu in advance.”

“Good enough for me! We’re adopting him!” Mei declared.}

"Oh god I'm being adopted by chaos gremlins." Shinsou whispers to himself in horror.

{Powerloader just sighed, “Adopting him?”

“Yep!” Mei smiled. “Izu-Kun and I are adopting him as our extra

credit project! Let me read your notes!”

Mei grabbed his notebook and started reading while Powerloader looked at Izuku, who smiled and shrugged, “Hey, at least she didn’t try to call Shinsou one of her babies.”}

"Yet." Uraraka teases.

{Mei hummed and turned a page, “Where did you even find Extra-Credit-Kun, anyway, Izu-Kun?”

Izuku couldn’t hold back a grin as he started walking back toward his room, “He yelled at my ex-bully during the entrance exam.”

Mei cackled.}

And the crowd joined her at the blunt delivery. It doesn't take long for the room to settle with the levity from this chapter calming their nerves. The excitement surrounding a new story returns as the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: Some stalker vibes

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Some stalker vibes

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Team up

{Hitoshi reapplied the bandages from a few days ago, even though the cuts were almost healed by now. His bullies had laid off him for the moment, too scared that his *mysterious backup* would pop out of the shadows at any moment. Hitoshi knew better than to expect that to last forever, especially once they figured out that the guy they were so afraid of was actually just a quirkless kid from another school who had his own bullies to worry about. Still, the break was nice while it lasted.}

"Fear is a wonderful status effect." Shigaraki comments.

"Funny as hell too." Dabi agrees

{Hitoshi stretched and climbed into bed to browse his phone until he felt tired enough to sleep. His foster parents didn't really care what he did when he had insomnia as long as he was quiet and didn't leave his room. But then again, the quiet rule had been pretty much constant since he turned four, so it wasn't that bad. At least he didn't have to worry about sharing a room, even if it stung a little that the other kids would rather let him have the attic to himself rather than share a room with the *villain*.}

"When we get back we should invite him over for movie night and such." Yaomomo suggests.

"He intends to transfer to the hero course if I remember correctly." Iida considers "It would improve group cohesion in the event that he joins A class as opposed to B." He agrees.

{Once his current fosters realized a roommate wasn't going to work, they'd cleaned out the tiny space above the garage and shoved him there to make room for the other kids. Half the walls were bare plywood and it was miserably hot in the summer, but Hitoshi couldn't' complain. At least he had a window in the roof so he could watch the stars when he inevitably got bored with his phone. It was cloudy tonight, but he glanced up anyway to see what constellations were out, then promptly scrambled out of bed, barely stifling a scream as he glimpsed a shadow, a human-shaped shadow, peering through his window. Hitoshi was half-convinced he'd imagined it…

Until the shadow knocked.}

Izuku sputters "I didn't... Tell me I didn't!"

{Hitoshi seriously considered just making a run for his life, Nevermind what his foster parents would say before stealing his courage and reaching for his phone. He turned on the flashlight and shone it toward the window. It was probably nothing, right? Just a raccoon or maybe a tree branch, even though there weren't any trees near his window. Still, there was no point in getting in trouble for a false alarm.}

"The fact that the boy is afraid of reporting a possible intruder is rather telling." Ectoplasm remarks.

"Another thing to look into upon our return." Nedzu taps his pen to his chin "With all we will have by the end of this I'll need to assign each teacher to something different. Possibly multiple cases per teacher."

"You can count on us heroes for backup since we're here seeing it anyway." Hawks offers.

"Even if you don't end up calling us in you better keep us in the loop." Miruko demands.

"I know I won't be able to rest well without knowing something." Mr. Brave agrees.

Nedzu chuckles to himself before replying "But of course."

{When he saw that it was the kid from the alley, Hitoshi could only blink in bewilderment. The kid gave him a bright smile as he waved. Through his window. On his roof.}

"Dude what?" Sero says confused.

"There's a reason I call those things Deku's *stalker* notebooks." Bakugo huffs.

{“What the…” Hitoshi breathed.}

"Mood." Our own Hitoshi says.

{“Hi Shinsou!” The kid’s voice was slightly muffled through the glass. “Let me in!”

Hitoshi’s curiosity won out over his intelligence and before he knew it, he’d reached out and unlatched the window. The kid tumbled onto his bed with a quiet *thump* and ruffled his curls, which did absolutely nothing to make them more presentable, before looking up, “Thanks! I’m Izuku Midoriya, by the way! I don’t think I ever got around to mentioning that the other day.”}

"No you didn't, but that's hardly the point right now." Jiro snarks with a laugh.

{“I thought I told you to go away.” Hitoshi said blankly.

“Oh, you did!” Midoriya nodded agreeably. “You have a really, *really* cool quirk, by the way! You’re gonna be able to do so many awesome things with it!”

“So why are you here?” Hitoshi could feel a migraine coming on. “Actually, back up, *how* are you here? I didn’t even tell you my name.”}

"I have my ways." Izuku deadpans leading Ochako, Mei, and Tsu to snort while Iida sighs and Todoroki smirks.

{“Oh, well, um…” Midoriya looked almost embarrassed. “I actually started with your uniform?”

“My uniform…” Hitoshi did a double take. “Wait, started?!”

Midoriya nodded, “Well, I know there are a lot of schools that use the same uniform, so I looked at what time they ended and crossed off the ones that weren't within walking distance of where

we met. Then I scanned through the websites of the ones left because at least at my school the bullies are the ones with the strongest quirks and end up getting featured a lot, so I figured I might be able to find one of yours. Once I'd found your school, I dug a little deeper and figured out it's *your* last year too, but I couldn't find what class you were in or what your name was, so I just kinda asked around about a kid with a verbal activation quirk, threw out 90% of the rumors, figured out what your name was and used that to find you!"}

"Good thing UA isn't letting the students help find us." Dabi remarks.

"Shut up, you idiot!" Shigaraki scolds "Don't give them any ideas!"

{Hitoshi stared at Midoriya, who was looking at him expectantly, "That's...kinda creepy."

To his surprise, Midoriya grinned "I know! Isn't it great?"}

"What the hell?"
"Is he okay?"
"My brain hurts."

{"Uh…" Hitoshi raised an eyebrow. "No?"

"Ok, well, not traditionally, but…" Midoriya bit his lip. "You want to be a hero, right?"

Hitoshi nodded hesitantly, "I'm going to go to UA. Are you here to stop me?"

"No!" Midoriya clapped a hand over his mouth as he realized how loud he'd been. "Uh, no, I actually want to be a hero too, so I was kinda hoping we could help each other? And maybe be, like, hero partners? Because, uh...well…"

Hitoshi gestured for him to continue, "Because what? Because you think hanging around the *villain* will make you less of a target?"}

"Damn kid let him finish." Dabi huffs.

{"No…" Midoriya puffed his cheeks out in frustration. "It's just...let's face it, neither of us is ever going to be the kind of hero that brings people hope. Kids like us can't be heroes like All Might"

“Maybe *you* can’t.” Hitoshi snarled. “But I’m gonna prove them all wrong and be…”

Midoriya waved his hands frantically, “No, we can’t be heroes like *All Might*, but we *can* be different! You’ve seen how much prejudice there is. You’ve got a villain quirk, Shinsou, and I’m quirkless. Even if a few of the more open-minded civilians decide to trust us, there’s still going to be a lot of people who are never going to be willing to see past our quirks.”}

"A harsh reality indeed." Tokoyami grumbles.

{Hitoshi huffed, “Ouch, ok. Great pep talk. Real inspiring.”}

Snort
"He's got you there."
"Mood."

{“Let me finish.” Midoriya said. “We might not be the kind of heroes that can make civilians think ‘*oh, thank god we’re saved,*’ when we arrive at the scene. So what if instead, we become the kind of heroes that make villains think, *‘oh, fuck, we’re screwed.’*”

Midoriya’s expression had morphed into a sly smile, but Hitoshi hung back, “What exactly are you suggesting?”

“I’m saying that we don’t have to bring hope if we can weaponize fear. People are already afraid of you.” Midoriya said. “And they’re either freaked out by me or think I’m weak. I think we can use that to our advantage. We’re never going to be very popular, but we can still save people!”}

"Holy shit!"
"Oh, no."
"Those poor villains."

{Hitoshi was silent for a long moment, “You’re insane.”

Midoriya’s face fell, but Hitoshi was too busy thinking through everything he’d just heard to comfort him. Fear tactics were normally associated with villains, but so was brainwashing. Not to mention that fear had been just enough to keep his bullies off his back for a few days. So yeah, Midoriya’s idea was crazy, but oddly enough, it was so crazy it just might work. Plus, it wasn’t like he had literally anything else going for him.

> “Ok, sure, I’m down. Let’s do it.” Hitoshi said finally, making Midoriya do a double take. “But that still doesn’t explain what you’re doing in my house in the middle of the night. Do you know how much trouble I could get in if my foster parents caught you?”
>
> “I was going to wait until tomorrow and find you after school!” Midoriya insisted, blushing. “But, uh...I got too excited.”
>
> He at least had the good grace to look sheepish and in spite of himself, Hitoshi smiled and shook his head, “Yep, you’re insane.”
>
> Midoriya grinned hesitantly, “I, uh, guess I’ll take that as a compliment.”}

"Sho stop grinning, you're scaring me." Mic begs.

"Never." Aizawa deadpans.

Meanwhile...

"Let's invite the purple boy over." Mei suggests.

"I'm game." Uraraka comments.

"I've no issue with it." Todoroki nods.

"Might as well." Tsu agrees.

"Shinsou-kun!" Izuku gets his attention "Come sit with us!"

"If that's agreeable." Iida adds.

"Why?" Shinsou replies.

"Because I've already adopted you in one story and you're Izu-kun's hero partner in another." Mei reasons.

Shinsou sighs "Whatever." he answers as he moves to join the group.

"Okay," Headcase calls out "the next chapter is starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

> Next Time: Kitty Pajamas

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP... Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Kitty PJs and Hero suit

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

What else do you need?

{“Deku, I have something for you.”

Izuku looked up from where he was looking over the analyses for the villains they would be fighting tomorrow night to see Eraser standing in the doorway, holding a silver metal case. He walked over and set the case on the desk Izuku was working at.}

"His costume!" Ashido and Kaminari cheer.

{“Normally we wouldn’t give you this until after school started,” Eraser shrugged, “but I think you’ll agree that almost nothing about this situation is normal, so we rushed the order.”

Izuku looked between Eraser and the case in confusion. Eraser rolled his eyes and gestured for him to open it. Izuku hesitantly complied and sucked in a breath when he saw what was inside.

It was his hero costume. It consisted of a sleeveless dark green bodysuit with black panels running down the length of the suit on both sides and an open collar. It had knee-high dark red boots with black armored sections on the thighs and toes. The fingerless gloves went all the way up to just above his elbows. They were the same dark red as his boots but the black armored sections were on his forearms so he could block attacks easier. They also had black knuckledusters built in to give more power to Izuku’s

punches. The utility belt for his smoke bombs and flash grenades was black and red, while the knife holsters on his hips were all plain black. He had a holster on his right thigh that held a spring-loaded grappling hook similar to the one he'd borrowed from Yaoyorozu during the entrance exam. There were empty holsters on each thigh and a green face mask with a black and red geometric pattern that made Izuku look at Eraser questioningly.}

"Deku, that's so cool." Uraraka squeals shaking him by the shoulder.

{"The extra holsters will be for your guns, once you're licensed," Eraser responded, "And the mask is sound canceling, with a mic on the inside. When you're wearing it, we'll be able to hear you through the comms, but anyone outside the comm system won't be able to. This way you can murmur as much as you need to without alerting enemies to your position. There's a button on the side that will turn that feature off in case you need to talk to civilians."}

"*That* is cool." Izuku insists.

{Izuku nodded. "That's smart. I had a few problems with that on previous internships, so that'll be good." He looked at Eraser hopefully. "Can I put it on?"

Eraser gave him a look, "I wouldn't have given it to you if you couldn't, problem child. You need to get used to the feel of it before the mission, anyway. Meet me in the gym when you're done and we'll spar."

Izuku nodded and got dressed once Aizawa left. He took a minute to look at himself in the mirror and smiles behind the mask. He looked like a hero.}

"He's so manly." Kirishima tears up while Bakugo rolls his eyes.

{Shouta hid a proud smile in his capture weapon when Deku walked into the gym in full costume. The kid really looked intimidating decked out in dark colors with weapons strapped all over him and Shouta felt a brief flash of pity for all the villains whose first meeting with him would be in a dark alley.}

"Ooooo, shivers." Toga giggles.

{Without any warning, Shouta grabbed his capture weapon and

ran forward. Deku's eyes widened slightly as he brought his arms in front of him to block a kick, then grabbed the capture weapon and wrapped it around his forearm, using it to pull Shouta closer. He threw a punch at Shouta's gut but hadn't let go of the capture weapon, so Shouta dodged the punch and yanked hard, making Deku stumble and creating an opening for Shouta to throw him over his shoulder.}

"Well that was badass." Jiro smirks.

{"Good," Shouta said, "you're moving pretty well. Is the costume causing any problems or impeding your movements in any way?"

Deku shook his head and waited for a moment, then his eyes widened and he pressed the button on the side of his mask.}

"He forgot." Izuku mumbles blushing.

{"I forget you couldn't hear me without comms." He laughed, "Um...no, the extra weight on my feet and hands will take some getting used to, but nothing is chafing or digging anywhere, so I think that's good, right?"

Shouta nodded, "All right, let's go again and get you used to the extra weight when you're fighting."

They spent the next few hours sparring and by the end of it, Deku was moving as easily in his costume as he could move without it and had gotten a feel for how to grab all his weapons. After that, they spent most of the rest of the day experimenting with the grappling hook so Deku wouldn't accidentally die if he had to use it.}

"Sports training montage~" Kaminari sings quietly.

{"This is going to be so cool to use in the middle of a fight, not just to get around!" Deku rambled once they'd finished, "I could probably use it to fly at opponents and increase the speed and power of my punches and kicks. I wonder if there could be a way to control the velocity? I'll have to look at the design and maybe talk to the support department when I get to UA…"}

"So many ideas!" Mei cheers.

{"You can worry about incorporating the grappling hook into your fighting style after school starts," Shouta interrupted, "for

tomorrow, just use it as a mobility aid."

Deku nodded with determination, then looked up at Shouta, "Um...thank you. By the way."

Shouta raised his eyebrow, "For what? Making sure you don't die?"}

Snort
Cough
Huff

{Deku fiddled with his hands, "I mean, that too, but… Thank you for helping me be a hero. And for being my friend. I was pretty depressed before and...and then you guys reached out and basically rekindled my dream. Even if it was just that, it'd be more than enough, but then you guys actively took me under your wing and helped train me. I just...thanks."

Shouta looked at Deku softly and ruffled his hair, "Go get dressed, problem child. You need to get a good night's sleep and I'm sure you're exhausted after today."

Deku gave him a bright smile and he knew the kid had seen straight through his apathetic exterior. He watched Deku leave to go to the locker rooms and Shouta couldn't help but feel grateful that the problem child had weaseled his way into his life.}

"Awwww." Midnight coos teasingly. Eraser just sighs.

{Izuku's whole body was buzzing with nervous energy. The past few months had been beyond his wildest dreams. Ok, well, not really. His wildest dreams involved him spontaneously developing a quirk and going on to become the world's greatest hero, even better than Kacchan, but those dreams were in the same vein as fantasy novels in that Izuku knew they were unrealistic and would never have the possibility of actually happening. Well, except if All Might had chosen him to receive his quirk apparently, but he was still kinda reeling from that discovery.}

"Haha, about that." Izuku huffs. Uraraka snickers while Iida pats him on the back.

{Izuku shook his head. Reality was much better than his dreams anyway. He was on track to become the first quirkless hero. He'd

gotten into UA, he'd learned to use weapons, and he even had a hero costume! Everything was falling into place and Izuku was the happiest he'd been since the doctor had told him to give up on his dreams when he was four years old.}

"I want that man's license." Aizawa growls.

"Indeed." Nedzu agrees.

{But no matter how hard he tried, Izuku still couldn't help but feel like Eraser and the others would wake up one day and realize that he wasn't worth it. They kept telling him that he was skilled and would be an amazing hero, but they had to be wrong. Izuku was nothing, a nobody, just a pebble on the side of the road in someone else's story. All this luck and success was just setting him up for devastating disappointment when his heroes inevitably realized how useless he actually was.}

"Oh no, he's spiraling!" Kaminari shouts in concern.

{Izuku stilled as an even worse idea occurred to him. What if this was all just a practical joke? What if Kacchan and the others had somehow impressed Eraser and the others and they were all laughing behind his back as they built up his dream only to take it away at the last minute? What if they were just pretending to be his friends even though they really hated him and were well aware of how useless he really was?}

"He's reaching!" Hagakure cries.

{He distantly realized that his brain was too tired to work correctly and was jumping to conclusions that wouldn't make any sense if he'd slept properly, but at the moment that was just a simple observation two steps removed from reality. The hypothetical betrayal felt all too real as tears began to leak from Izuku's eyes and soak the pillow as he struggled to breathe in the dark of his room. Why? Why would they do this to him? He really was worthless if he couldn't see through such an obvious ruse, to begin with. Why did he ever think anyone would actually want to be friends with him?}

"No they like you. They believe in you. Just like we do." Yaomomo assures.

{Izuku didn't notice that his sobs had gotten louder until someone came into his room and turned on the light. He shoved a hand

over his mouth to try to contain the sound. He really was hopeless, wasn't he? Now he'd woken someone else up with his stupid crying and he was being such a bother and why? Why was he so useless?

He felt the bed dip as another person came and sat down beside him and a hand gently carded through his hair.}

"Aizawa-sensei's got him." Ojirou calms Hagakure.

{"Deku?" Eraser's voice was soft and full of concern, but Izuku couldn't help but wonder how much of that was faked, "Hey kid, what's wrong?"

Izuku let out another sob and Eraser pulled him up and into a hug. Izuku clung to him on instinct as he started babbling incoherently and Eraser whispered comfort as he continued running a hand through his hair.}

"And you say you aren't good with kids." Mic grins proudly while rubbing his friend's shoulders.

{"No, we're not gonna leave you, kid." He said softly. "We really do care about you. I don't know where you got the idea that this is all a joke or if that's even what you're saying, but it isn't. We would never do that to you. We would never betray you, Deku. Ok?"}

"I don't like that the screen blurs when he can't see through his tears." Shigaraki complains.

{Eventually, the reassurances managed to make their way into Izuku's anxiety-addled brain, and his sobs gradually reduced themselves to sniffles. Now, with the lights on and Eraser beside him in ridiculous cat-printed pajamas, his thought process made a lot less sense. He giggled and Eraser raised one eyebrow.}

Snort
"Oh my god!"
Cough
"What is he wearing?"
Cackle
"Kill me now."
Wheeze

{"What's so funny, Problem Child?"

Izuku giggled again and gestured helplessly to Eraser's pajamas. Eraser looked down at his outfit like he'd forgotten what he was wearing and sighed, "If you tell Joke about this, I will personally make sure they never find your body."}

"TOO LATE!" Joke cackles.

{"They," Izuku hiccupped, somewhere between a laugh and a sob, "they have kittens on them!"}

"Yes, yes they do." Dabi chuckles condescendingly.

{Eraser rolled his eyes, "Yes. They do. And unless you would like me to buy you a pair to match, I would advise you shut up about them."

Izuku was full-on laughing now, "Eraserhead, this big bad serious hero, sleeps in kitten pajamas!"

Eraser scoffed, "I can have kitten pajamas if I want, problem child."}

Midnight is losing her mind "Shouta!"

{Izuku stared at him with wide eyes, "Do any of your friends know?"

Eraser glared at him, "Again, if you tell anyone, Deku, they will never find your body. I have a reputation to maintain."}

"Not after this." Aizawa shakes his head in defeat.

{Izuku smiled, "That would be perfect merch! Imagine going to a hero convention and there's a booth just selling Eraserhead brand kitten pajamas!"}

"No." Eraser deadpans.

{Eraser groaned and shook his head, "That would be a nightmare. No. Never. That is not happening." He sighed and looked at Izuku. "Are you feeling any better?"

Izuku stilled. He'd almost forgotten why Eraser was sitting on his bed in his ridiculous pajamas. After a long moment he nodded, "I guess I don't know what came over me. I still feel like I don't deserve you guys sometimes. Well, most of the time, actually. I guess it only makes sense when your brain isn't working quite

right.”}

"Late-night spirals are typical." Izuku nods.

"There's nothing to distract you from it." Shinsou muses.

"And then that of course causes nightmares." Todoroki agrees.

"I think it's best to inform each other of such nights." Iida suggests

"Yeah."
"Definitely."
"Anytime." The girls chime in.

{Eraser nodded, “I get it. You’ve been told your whole life that no one would ever care about you except your mom and that attitude isn’t going to go away overnight.” He leaned back so he could look Izuku in the eyes. “But just know that we really are here for you. Not because we have to be, but because we genuinely like you. I know just words aren’t enough, but I hope someday you’ll be able to see how important you are to us, ok Deku?”}

"What he said." Tsu agrees; leaning against Izuku bringing a smile to his face.

{Izuku nodded. The anxious thoughts still clung to the back of his mind like a stubborn piece of sludge, but he could see past them now at least. He took a deep breath and smiled, “Thanks Eraser. I think I’m ok now. I think we’d better try to sleep, though. Tomorrow’s gonna be a long day.”

Eraser nodded and ruffled Izuku’s hair one last time before he stood up, “Good night, Deku. Don’t be afraid to wake me up if you need anything.”

Izuku nodded, “Alright, I’ll let you know if I desperately need to take a picture of your pajamas to send to the group chat.”}

"Problem Child." Aizawa warns.

"It wasn't me." Izuku chuckles.

{Eraser paused at the door and looked incredulously at Izuku, who was grinning widely. After a long moment, he scoffed and rolled his eyes.

“Goodnight, problem child.” He said fondly.

“Goodnight, Eraser.”

Izuku buried himself deep in his blankets as Eraser turned off the light and closed the door. He was asleep long before his anxiety could take over again.}

The heroes and students attempt to chat about the upcoming raid but are interrupted by the villains chanting 'Mastermind, Mastermind, Mastermind' until the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Rogue's Gallery

MM:SFH Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Foreshadowing

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Shouto

"Why is my name the title?" Todoroki demands.

Headcase just smirks "Watch and see." She says setting many on edge.

{“Hello everyone and welcome to the sports festival! Can I get a Plus Ultra?!”

Present Mic’s booming voice could be heard even from the sidewalk outside the stadium and Izuku shook his head. *Heroes.*}

"The hell is he doing there!" Mic shouts with worry.

{Honestly, Izuku didn’t know why they were still holding the festival this year after All Might had been killed on school grounds, but the principal had held a press conference a few days after the funeral announcing that it would continue as planned. Something about how with the symbol of peace gone, it fell to the rising generation to bring hope to the world, or something like that. Well, at least Izuku could get some good intel on the quirks he’d be facing in a few years. He wished he’d had that info before the USJ attack but, oh well, better late than never.}

"This is why we shouldn't *broadcast* the sports festival." Aizawa groans.

{He walked past dozens of pro heroes as he went through the heightened security, but no one gave a kid in a T-shirt and jeans a

second glance. He smiled and found his seat. Mastermind was here in their midst and the heroes would never know.}

"This is fun." Dabi smirks.

{His mom had been so excited when he told her a friend of his had won tickets and invited him to go. They'd never had the money to afford it before, but Izuku hadn't had a shortage of cash since he'd become a villain. Too bad his mom didn't know about his secret funds, hence the cover story. He wished he could have brought Himiko, but a suspected serial killer couldn't exactly sneak past security.}

"That would be a problem." Shinsou drawls.

{"All right! Let's welcome in the students who faced a villain attack and survived! The same students that All Might gave his life for! Class 1-A!"}

"Oh that's so much worse than just surviving those villains." Momo winces.

"They'll never live this down." Jiro frowns.

{The stadium erupted into cheers and Izuku watched as the familiar students strode into the stadium. They looked vaguely uncomfortable...they probably didn't like the reminder of watching the number one hero die, it must have been traumatic. Izuku squashed the feelings of guilt that tried to choke him. They were *heroes.* They had been given everything in life just because of their quirks, while Izuku's life had been nothing *but* trauma. They deserved a little trauma after what they had put him through.

Watching All Might die in front of them was just payback.}

"He's justifying to himself." Izuku sighs.

"These little glimpses of you in him make this just that little bit more real." Uraraka says sadly.

{He was excited to see what the purple-haired student's quirk actually was. He figured it was a verbal response triggered, considering his defiant behavior at the USJ, but the question remained of whether it put someone to sleep like Midnight's quirk, or was somehow more involved. He was also excited about

{the half-and-half boy's quirk since he was one of the few who managed to fight back during the attack, and against the Nomu too! Izuku smiled darkly as he watched Katsuki climb the steps to give the opening speech. There was always the possibility that Katsuki would be injured in one of his matches, but Izuku knew he shouldn't get his hopes up.}

"Fuck you too." Bakugo huffs.

{"I just want to say, All Might was an amazing hero. We owe it to him to give it our all and that's why I'm gonna win this thing."}

"That might be the most touching thing that boy has ever said." All Might mentions.

"That's just sad." Midnight sighs.

{Izuku rolled his eyes as the other students booed. Of course, Katsuki would manage to compliment All Might and insult his competitors all in one breath. His old bully would never change, would he?}

"Depends on the world apparently." Ojirou murmurs.

{The first round was interesting, but not surprising. It was a surprise to learn that the half-and-half boy was Todoroki Shouto, the son of Endeavor. He managed to freeze most of the competition and narrowly beat out Katsuki as the winner of the round.}

"Damnit." Bakugo grumbles.

{Izuku leaned forward as he watched Todoroki glare blankly at the crowd as Katsuki lost it. His coloring was very distinct and he only ever created ice from his right side, so could he do it from his left? Izuku pulled out a notebook and began to write down his thoughts. It wouldn't surprise him at all if Todoroki had some kind of hybrid quirk, unfair, but not unheard of. Maybe he could create ice from the right side of his body, the white-haired side, and fire from his left? If that was the case then why hadn't he shown off his fire side yet? It would have made much more sense to melt through the robots or use the fire to propel himself as Katsuki did, but Todoroki only used his ice. Interesting.}

"I don't like other you's interest in me." Todoroki mentions.

"Neither do I." Izuku agrees.

{The next round gave Izuku a good chance to evaluate the purple-haired boy's quirk. He was named Shinsou, at least according to the scoreboard. Izuku watched as he took advantage of the other teams as they targeted Todoroki. He would approach them as if he wanted to team up, but then the other team would simply hand over their points without a fight. So some sort of brainwashing, not just putting them in a daze. Izuku wondered how complicated the commands could be. It was a useful quirk, shame it had to go to a hero.}

"Fuck you too." Shinsou sneers.

{In the end, Todoroki, Katsuki, and Shinsou all moved on, as well as another team comprised mostly of class 1-A members, plus a support student. And still, Todoroki didn't use his fire. Izuku knew he had it now. He'd seen it ignite briefly once when Katsuki had gotten too close, but Todoroki had looked angry and extinguished it almost immediately. His mastery of his ice was amazing, but Izuku couldn't help but wonder how powerful he could be if he stopped ignoring his left side.}

"At least you don't have that problem anymore, Todoroki-Kun." Uraraka grins at the boy.

"It wasn't easy." Todoroki admits.

{He put his notebook away, stretched, and headed for the student areas. He never had been very good at ignoring his curiosity, had he?

Sneaking past the guards was almost too easy, even if they were pro heroes, and Izuku walked confidently as he searched for Todoroki. If he was caught, he could just say he was looking for 'Kacchan' and that they were old friends. Sneaking backstage to see him and wish him luck was something the old Izuku would have done, no question.}

"I hate that he isn't wrong." Bakugo growls.

{"You're a disgrace, Shouto." Izuku ducked behind a wall as he heard Endeavor's voice, "There wouldn't even be a question of your position if you would just use the fire I gave you."}

"This won't end well." Endeavor grumbles.

{“I will never use your fire,” Todoroki’s voice was tight with anger, “I *will* make it to the top, but I will do it without your quirk.”

“Seriously, Shoto. I indulged you when you were younger, but it’s time you give up this childish tantrum!”

Even from his place around the corner, Izuku could see his breath as the temperature dropped.

“It’s time for you to go, Father. The tournament will be starting soon.”

Izuku flattened himself against the wall as Endeavor stalked past him, radiating heat. The hero didn’t even glance his way, just disappeared down the hall. Izuku waited a moment before turning the corner, it might not be the best timing, but he didn’t want to lose his chance to talk to Todoroki.}

"Leave him alone!"
"Go away!"
"Don't you touch him!"

{Shouto’s eyes widened slightly as a short boy with green hair, obviously a civilian, came into view. This area was supposed to be off-limits for spectators. Endeavor had gotten past security by virtue of being the new number-one hero, but this was just a normal kid, so how did he get back here. Was he a threat? Shouto relaxed slightly when the kid gave him a brilliant smile. Anyone who could smile like that couldn’t be dangerous.}

"And that's where you're wrong." Shoji remarks.

{“Hello, Todoroki?” The boy asked nervously. Shouto nodded and the boy smiled, “You’re doing really well so far. Your skills are amazing! I especially loved how you beat out Katsuki in the last two rounds.”

Shouto raised one eyebrow, “Katsuki?”

The boy’s expression soured slightly, interesting. “Katsuki Bakugo. We’ve known each other since we were kids.” He smiled again. “Sorry, I forgot to introduce myself! I’m Izuku Midoriya.”

Shouto nodded, “Why are you back here?”

Midoriya rubbed the back of his neck, “I actually have a question for you. You’re obviously pretty powerful with just your ice, but you have a fire quirk as well, right? Why don’t you use it?”}

"Uh-oh." both Todoroki and Midoriya say in unison.

{Shouto scowled, and turned away, “My father put you up to this, didn’t he?”

Midoriya grabbed his arm, he was stronger than he looked, “No! I was just curious and I wanted to know because I thought it was interesting, not that I’m going to try to force you to use your fire I was just wondering and…” He trailed off and stood there awkwardly. Shouto didn’t know if it was just one thing, but for some reason, he felt like he could trust Midoriya. Maybe it was his face when he talked about Bakugo, but for some reason, Shouto thought that if anyone could understand what he was going through, it was this boy he’d barely met.}

"You just radiate *safe*, if that makes sense." Shoto comments. Their squad agrees easily.

{He sighed and leaned against the wall, “Have you ever heard of quirk marriages?”}

Todoroki freezes and Izuku reaches to grip his hand.

{Midoriya’s eyes widened in realization, “No!”

Shouto nodded sadly, “My father always wanted to be number one. I guess he is now, but he wanted it to be because of his power, not because All Might got himself killed. He had enough money and power as the number two hero to buy off my mother’s family and force her into a marriage. He got her pregnant multiple times trying to create a child with a quirk strong enough to beat All Might. He raised me to be his ‘masterpiece’, not his son.” Midoriya was listening with wide eyes and Shouto took a deep breath. It felt liberating to finally talk about this. “In every memory, I have of my mother, she’s always crying. She called my left side unbearable, right before she poured boiling water on my face. I never blamed her though, it was all my father’s fault for forcing her to that point.”}

Silence

"So you were *underplaying* the shit father thing." Miruko growls.

"When we return, your *son* will be joining me for sessions at *least* one session a week, and you *will* sign off on it without hesitation. Am I clear?" Hound Dog asserts.

"Crystal." Endeavour agrees.

{Midoriya was staring at him strangely, “You must hate your father, then.”}

"And people call me blunt." Tsu jokes still leaning closer to Todoroki after the revelation of his trauma.

{Shouto thought for a moment. Midoriya had said it like a statement, rather than a question, but he wanted to answer it anyway. Did he hate his father? He thought about the rage he buried under a layer of ice, about the fear he felt when he thought about using his fire. Is that what hate felt like?}

"Yes, it is." Iida winced.

{“Yes.” He said firmly. “I think I really do hate him.”}

Endeavor sighs.

{Midoriya nodded, “I think that’s good then. I understand why you don’t want to use your fire, but just so you know, it’s your quirk, not his and you can always use it to do things your father would hate. Good luck Todoroki! Crush Katsuki for me!”

And with that, Midoriya waved and left Todoroki to make his way back to his classmates.

“Where’d you go you half-and-half bastard?!” Bakugo yelled, “I looked everywhere for you and couldn’t find you!"

Shouto felt consumed by the hatred he had just realized he felt and it left him numb as he thought about Midoriya’s words, “I ran into an old friend of yours.”

“Friend?” Ashido laughed, “Bakugo had friends before UA?”}

"Oi!" Bakugo growls while Ashido snickers.

{“Shut up Pinky!” Bakugo yelled, “Who was it?”

“Izuku Midoriya. He’s interesting.”

Bakugo sneered, “Deku? He’s worthless and he’s *not* my friend. I’d never sink low enough to be that idiot’s friend!”

Shouto nodded absently, “I liked him.”

He then tuned out any response Bakugo had and the laughter of their other classmates. He had a lot to think about.}

"Well that was ominous." Shinsou deadpans.

"Let's hope that's all it is." Iida remarks.

"Viridian's on his way to a hospital, isn't he?" Uraraka asks.

"That's right, kero." Tsu agrees.

"Hope he heals quickly." Izuku sighs.

The next chapter starts up.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out the Rogue's Gallery on discord

V:TGG Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

A broken arm and no more Aldera

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

The Hospital

{Izuku let Mom lead him into the waiting room and he sat down while she went to the desk to fill out the paperwork. When she was done, she came and sat beside him, but there wasn't anything she could say to make the situation better, so they just sat silently until Izuku's name was called.

A nurse led them into an examination room and took Izuku's vitals. She took in Izuku's bruises, then looked at Inko suspiciously, "What happened?"

"Nothing!" Izuku said quickly. "I just fell…"

"There was a fight at school." Inko interrupted. "He's been hiding the bullying from me, so it makes sense he'd hide it from you as well, but you don't have to do that anymore Izuku."}

"Good mama." Midnight smiles.

"There going to suspect her." Eraser warns.

"It's protocol." Tsukauchi reminds.

"Doesn't make it better." Mic pouts.

{Izuku stared at the ground again and the nurse nodded before she left to go get the doctor.

"Izuku…"

Whatever she was going to say was cut off by the doctor opening the door, “Izuku Midoriya?”

Izuku nodded and the doctor sat down beside the examination table he was sitting on, “Can you tell me what’s going on?”

“I’m fine!” Izuku said, “I can handle it, Mom’s just worried!”

“Izuku.” Inko was starting to get exasperated. Why wouldn’t Izuku let them help him?}

"It never got that bad for me, but I'd have to say habit." Izuku sighs sadly.

{“That’s ok.” The doctor smiled. “I’m sure you’re a strong young man. But why don’t you show me what your mom’s worried about, to ease her nerves at the very least.”

Izuku frowned for a moment before shrugging off his uniform jacket, then his shirt, struggling as he tried to undo the buttons one-handed. Inko almost helped him, but one look was enough to tell her that Izuku needed to do that much on his own. She struggled not to gasp in horror when she saw the collection of bruises that had been hiding beneath his clothes, some already in the healing stages, which meant that this was far from the only beating Izuku had received.}

Gasp
Hiss
"Ouch"
"Yikes"
Wince

{The doctor though, just took the injuries in stride and gently started prodding at his arm, “Does this hurt?”

Izuku winced but shook his head.

The doctor sighed, “I’d feel more comfortable getting some x-rays, ok? Mrs. Midoriya, you stay here, and I’ll walk Izuku over to radiology, okay?”}

"You're literally sitting in a doctor's office trying to say the clearly crooked arm doesn't hurt." Shinsou levels a look at the screen.

"A broken arm isn't something to mess with." Izuku scrunches his nose.

"You would know." Uraraka teases earning herself a stuck-out tongue from her friend.

{Izuku thought everyone was overreacting. Sure, his arm hurt, but it wasn't broken. Probably. Honestly, Izuku hadn't thought through what would happen if it was and they hadn't gone to the hospital, but his arm didn't hurt enough to be broken. After the x-rays were taken, he was expecting the doctor to lead him back to the room where his mom was waiting, but the doctor led him to a different one instead.}

"Why would they do that?" Kaminari asks.

{The doctor closed the door and turned to face Izuku, "Midoriya? I just want to let you know that you're safe here and we will do everything in our power to help you, ok?"}

"Oh they think he's being abused." Momo worries.

"Technically he is." Jiro reminds.

{Izuku nodded. He wasn't quite sure why the doctor was telling him this. Wasn't that what doctors were there for?

"Good." The doctor said. "Now, is everything ok at home?"

Izuku looked at the doctor in confusion, "Yes? Why wouldn't it be?"

"Well, sometimes when kids come in with injuries like yours…"

Izuku's eyes widened, "You think *Mom* did this to me? No!" he tried to instinctively wave his arms in front of him, but winced at the pain the action caused. "No, Mom would never hurt me."}

"I know we've seen so but it's nice to have confirmation." Recovery Girl informs.

{"Are you sure?" The doctor asked softly. "You don't have to protect her."

"No! I just…" Izuku started crying again. "I love my mom! I didn't tell her about the bullying because I didn't want her to worry and there's nothing she could have done anyways and I didn't want to get anyone in trouble, but then it got worse and I still didn't tell her and then today happened and then the principal called and I

didn't want to come here and now she's gonna get in trouble and it's all my fault and…"

"Breath, Midoriya." The doctor sounded slightly panicked. "Your mom isn't going to get in trouble. We just needed to make sure that there wasn't any abuse happening and for that, we needed to ask without her in the room. I didn't mean to scare you, I'm sorry."}

"We might have to ask these questions someday." Sato remarks.

"It will be déchirant, certainly." Aoyama nods sadly.

{Izuku nodded shakily, "O-okay, that makes sense. Sorry."

The doctor smiled, "It's not your fault. I'm glad your mom's taking care of you, just...let her know in the future. Make her job a little easier, okay?"

"O-okay." He felt a little bad for lying to the doctor, but things would be so much better if Mom just thought this was an isolated incident. She wouldn't have to worry so much.}

"Problem Child." Aizawa groans.

{The doctor walked him back to the room where Mom was waiting and opened the file the radiologist gave him, "Alright, it looks like you have a break in your left arm, but your ribs are fine, so that's the good news. I just need to set the bone and put a cast on it and you'll be good to go. What color do you want?"

Izuku shrugged. A few months ago, he probably would have gone with All Might colors, but now…

"Green's fine." He decided finally. It didn't need to match his vigilante gear, but green was his vigilante color, so it made him feel...useful? Not like a Deku who got his arm broken at school and got his mother accused of child abuse. He was so stupid.}

"No the fuck you aren't." Kirishima snaps at the screen and blushes at his outburst "Sorry."

"No, no, you right." Ashido assures.

{The cast took longer to put on than Izuku had thought it would. It had to dry in between the various layers, but by the end, he

had a semi-comfortable cast that encased his arm from the elbow down. Now if only he actually had friends to sign it.}

"Oof."

{“Alright, Midoriyas, you’re almost good to go. I’ll just send in the nurse who can go over how to care for the cast.”

“Thank you so much.” Mom said.

The doctor smiled, “My pleasure.”

Once they were alone, the same awkward silence fell that had dominated the whole afternoon. Inko looked over at Izuku and wondered how to bring up what she’d started thinking about while Izuku had been getting his X-rays.

“I don’t think that school is working.” She said finally.}

"Ya' think." Dabi snarks.

{Izuku looked at her, “What?”

“The school.” She said. “I don’t think it’s a good fit. If they knew what those other kids were doing to you and blamed you instead of doing anything to stop it, then…” she sighed, “but I know how close you’ve always been with Katsuki. I don’t want to separate you from him.”}

"Uh..." Sero winces "...About that."

{Izuku bit his lip and Inko could see his brain working overtime as he debated what to say.

“I-I don’t think Kacchan would miss me.”}

"Not yet." Izuku huffs under his breath.

{Inko felt her heart break all over again. Had Katsuki…? She’d hoped that he had protected Izuku because he wanted to be a hero, but with how *broken* Izuku sounded, and how convinced he seemed that Katsuki wouldn’t miss him, then...oh, her poor baby.}

Bakugo sinks in his seat.

{“We could look into transferring you to a different school.” She

said.

To her surprise, Izuku shook his head, “There wouldn’t be any point. I’m the problem and that’s going to be the same wherever I go. Going to a new school would just mean I’d be quirkless *and* the new kid.”}

"Reality is a cruel entity indeed." Tokoyami rumbles.

{Inko frowned. Unfortunately, she saw Izuku’s logic. The bullying had started because he was diagnosed as quirkless and Izuku was right, that wasn't going to change. She’d like to believe that a new school would be better and kinder, but...kids were cruel. There was a good chance his new classmates would be just as bad or even worse than the ones he had now. She couldn’t do that to him.}

"So what can she do?" Hagakure worries.

{But she also couldn’t, in good conscience, send him back to Aldera. Not after how they’d had the *audacity* to blame him for being bullied. But what other options were there?

“What if we could find something online?” She suggested. “You can’t be bullied by other students if there are none.”}

"That could work." Midnight considers.

"He'll be isolated though." Mic mentioned with worry.

"Better that than dead." Aizawa snaps.

{Izuku looked skeptical, “Does something like that even exist?”

Inko shrugged, “I don’t know, but if it does, would you at least look into it? See if it’s something you’d be interested in?”

Izuku thought for a long moment and Inko was starting to get worried she’d somehow said the wrong thing when Izuku smiled, “Okay, Mom. I promise I’ll look into it when we get home.”}

"That would have been so nice." Izuku says wistfully.

{“Tomorrow.” Inko said. “When we get home, we’re not going to worry about anything except eating dinner and watching TV. deal?”

Izuku laughed, “Deal.”

There was a knock on the door and the nurse walked in, “Hello, Midoriya's. I’m here to give you some instructions, then you’ll be good to go. That cast needs to stay on for about six weeks to give your arm adequate time to heal. Keep it dry and don’t participate in any sports or vigorous activities that could irritate your arm until you get the cast off. Make sure to call us if you think anything is wrong and that’s about it! You’re free to go.”

Mom thanked the nurse and they left. Izuku felt his stomach twist as he mentally reviewed the instructions. He wasn’t allowed to do any physical activity that could jostle his arm for the next month and a half. If he did, he could reinjure his arm, which would just cause more trouble for everyone and put Mom through all this worry all over again, and he couldn’t do that to her.

So what was he supposed to do about his vigilantism?}

"Oh, no." Izuku says in horror standing and turning toward his teacher. "Aizawa-sensei I'm so sorry."

"For what?" Aizawa says concerned.

"That other you just figured out that he's suicidal and he's going to disappear." Izuku stresses. Aizawa groans dragging a hand down his face as the rest of the room reacts.

"Damnit!"
"Poor sensei!"
"This will be painful!"
"Fuck!"

A loud clap reverberates through the room silencing all. "I know you're worried but we can't see what happens next unless we move on."

The audience is quick to settle in for more.

Now Playing

CC:SS Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Revenge plans

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Petty

{Izuku frowned in frustration as he turned off his computer and gathered his things in preparation to go to their core classes. He'd spent most of the afternoon watching class 1A through the cameras as they did some sort of indoor combat exercise that All Might had put together and it was...frustrating. Don't get him wrong, it was amazing to see all of the students' amazing quirks in action! It was just so frustrating to see them acting so far beneath their potential! Like that kid with the electricity quirk who fried his brain within seconds of the exercise starting or the kid with the hot and cold quirk who didn't even use his heated side until the exercise was already over! They could do so much *more!* They could save so many people if they could just think a little more creatively.}

"I know I'm working on it." Kaminari whines.

"He'll be resistant to that advice." Todoroki sighs.

{And then there was Katsuki. He had everything. He had an amazing quirk, good battle sense, and even some of the techniques Izuku had suggested before Katsuki had started bullying him. He really did have the potential to be an amazing hero, maybe even the best, if he wasn't so violent.}

"And who knows how much better he would be if not for..." Momo

pauses to find the right words "...their falling out." she finishes carefully."

{He hardly noticed Mei start rambling to him as soon as he sat down at the desk outside his workroom to wait for the teacher to arrive until she slammed her hands down and leaned down until she was nose to nose with him, “Ok, what’s up?”

Izuku leaned back slightly and stuttered, “W-what?”

Mei rolled her eyes and leaned forward even more so that Izuku was forced to lean all the way back in his seat until his head was touching the wall behind him, “You’re dragging your feet. Didn’t you get to watch the hero course fight today? I wasn’t even expecting to be able to get a word in edgewise, but here you are giving one-word answers!”}

"You caught on to my habits fast." Izuku sounds impressed.

"You're really straightforward." Mei dismisses.

{“...oh.” Izuku shrugged. “It’s just Ka...I was observing my bully’s class today.”

Instantly, Mei looked murderous, “I can’t believe they let that asshole in after what he did to you! And didn’t he try to attack Extra-Credit-Kun during the exam? I should go straight to Nedzu and tell him that he needs to expel that jerk immediately…”

Izuku interrupted her with a sigh, “You can’t do that, Mei. First of all, my teachers purposely never reported the bullying so there wouldn’t be red flags when he applied to UA. Second of all, he didn’t attack Shinsou. Even if he *had* actually hurt him, it would have just been as collateral damage, or in retribution for yelling at him. Last, of all, he probably shouldn’t be expelled.”}

"Why the hell not?!" Sero asks incredulously "No offense Bro."

"I've been asking the same question." Bakugo scoffs.

{“And why not?!” Mei’s yell caught the attention of the rest of the class, “He’s a *bully,* Izu-Kun! He made you miserable for years, he shouldn’t be a hero!”

“Wait, what are we talking about?” Kohaku interrupted, pulling off the scarf she used to cover her hair while inventing, “What’s

this about a bully being a hero?”

“Nothing!” Izuku said quickly.

Mei shot him a glare before turning to the rest of the class, the traitor, “Izu-kun’s old bully somehow got into the hero course. He was part of the class Izuku observed today.”

“What?!” Hanzou bared his teeth, his normal wide smile becoming sharp and intimidating, “What’s his name, I just want to talk.”}

"No." Izuku groans much to his friends' amusement.

{“Everybody stop!” Izuku said sternly. “Nobody is going to do *anything.* Nobody’s going to try to fight him and nobody’s going to Nedzu. *Understood?”*

Mei didn’t drop her glare, “But…”

“No.” Izuku held her gaze.

“So what’d he do today that put you in such a funk?” Kohaku asked. “Like, I was expecting to have to tell you to shut up at least three times.”}

Izuku made a sound of offense.

{“See?!” Mei gestured broadly to her. “I’m not the only one who noticed!”

Izuku shot her a look, “It’s nothing.”

“Yeah, no, dude.” Hanzou said with a small smile. “We’re not buying that.”

Izuku looked around the room, hoping for someone to be on his side, but even Shiguro shrugged, “If it was really nothing, you, um, you probably wouldn’t be so insistent?”}

"He has a point." Uraraka teases.

{Izuku sighed. He should have expected that his classmates would be at least as curious as he was, especially after meeting Mei. This was what he got for joining the support course, “It was just annoying. There was an odd number of students, something about a student leaving because of Eraserhead’s hazing yesterday, so he

was put by himself against two other students, one with a speed quirk and the other with gravity negation."}

"It will be interesting to see how certain events play out differently." Iida mentions.

"Except in Mastermind." Izuku scowls.

"No, but how is our class going to handle things without him?" Todoroki ponders.

"Not to mention Deku attending without One for All, kero." Tsu wonders.

"We'll make it through." Uraraka comforts.

{"Heh," Kohaku chuckled, "Shouldn't that be a good thing? I bet he got his ass handed to him, didn't he?"

Izuku shook his head, "He put them both in the infirmary. Like, I know that violence is an inherent part of the hero industry. You can't defeat villains without hurting them! But none of the other students were injured badly enough to have to get medical attention. One of the signs of an amazing hero is actually how much they're able to *avoid* harm." He shook his head. "I'm probably just being nitpicky because of our history."}

"No Problem Child it is not." Aizawa grits his teeth.

{"Probably." Hanzou agreed. "But that still doesn't mean he should be in the hero course if he bullied you, dude. What's to stop him from going totally crazy and hurting someone who's not a villain?"

Shiguro nodded in agreement, "I wouldn't want any of my old bullies to be heroes, either."

"Yeah!" Mei crossed her arms in front of her chest. "So I'm going to Nedzu and telling him to kick this guy out! That rat loves you enough to give you a whole room, I'm sure he'd be happy to expel him for you."}

"Sadly not without proof." Nezu frowns.

{Izuku wasn't so sure, but surprisingly, he realized that it might not be outside of the realm of possibility. It was so surreal to have

adults who actually *cared,* and if that was all there was to it, then Izuku might actually be tempted to go to Nedzu himself, seeing as he most likely wouldn't get punished for snitching, but the situation was a little more complicated than that, "It's not that I want Katsuki to be a hero so much that I don't want him to be a villain. Does that make sense?"}

Bakugo flinches.

{"He's a bully, Izu-kun!" Mei protested. "He's already a villain in my book!"

Izuku looked around and saw his classmates looking confused and still angry on his behalf, but didn't see any of the understanding he'd been expecting. He sighed, "He has the potential to be a decent hero, and his violent tendencies will be directed toward villains, but if he gets expelled, or worse, black-listed, what'll he do? At least as a hero, his violent tendencies will be directed toward villains and people who deserve it, rather than any civilian who looks at him wrong."}

Bakugo growls wordlessly gripping his armrests while Kirishima rubs his shoulder.

{"Still doesn't mean he deserves to be a hero." Mei grumbled.

Izuku shrugged, "Maybe not, but it isn't even a big deal! It's not like I'm going to see him a lot. We're in different departments and I'm going to start arriving early so I won't even see him on my way to school! The only interaction I'll even have with him will be my analysis project he won't even read anyway! So just drop it."}

"He's got your number." Ashido chuckles.

"Whatever." Bakugo grumbles.

{His classmates didn't necessarily seem *happy* with his explanation, but at least they saw the logic in it. Izuku supposed that was about as good as he could hope for. Everyone here was extremely intelligent, they wouldn't have gotten in otherwise, but *nerds* often weren't treated the best. Add to that Hanzou's mutation quirk, Shiguro's shyness, and Mei being...well, *Mei* and there was a good chance that every single one of his classmates had been bullied at some point in their lives. Of course, they wouldn't be happy about letting a bully off the hook.}

"Ain't that the truth." Mei laughs.

{“There’s gotta be a way to get some sort of revenge, at least, right?” Hanzou said after a long minute. “I mean, we can’t just let that dude get off scot-free!”

Mei’s eyes lit up, so Izuku interrupted, “That’s really not necessary, guys!”

“No,” Kohaku grinned, “but it’ll be fun!”}

"Revenge of the nerds!" Toga cheers.

{Mei grinned in return, “Oooh! I like you! Come on, Izu-kun! Revenge! We’re the support course! We’ll have access to all his babies!”

Izuku rolled his eyes, “As fun as that would be, he’s still a hero student, and it’s our responsibility as support students to *support* him, not sabotage him. Not to mention that faulty support gear could potentially endanger not only him, but also his classmates and eventually civilians, so revenge is out of the question.”}

"Thank you." Maijima sighs in relief.

{Kohaku thought for a long moment, “What about just being a little petty?”

Izuku looked at her curiously, which she took as permission to continue, “I mean, obviously we wouldn’t do anything to put him in danger or anything, that would be stupid, but you know how annoying a tiny little rock can be when it’s in your shoe?”}

"Yes." Shinsou grins.

{Mei’s eyes lit up again, “You’re suggesting we do a bunch of tiny things to annoy him?”}

"Oh please do." Kaminari bounces in excitement.

{Kohaku nodded, grinning, “It’s how I got rid of my bullies back in elementary school before everyone learned not to mess with me. The big thing is plausible deniability. Don’t do anything that you couldn’t talk your way out of if the teachers ask. But we’ll know, which will be really satisfying if he gets a shirt that’s say...half a size too small and the slightly wrong shade.”}

"That will drive me insane." Bakugo confirms.

{Izuku thought about that for a minute. He had to admit that it might be fun, provided that no actual harm was being done, since he didn't want to become a bully in return or put Katsuki in any danger, and if he could stop at any time, “I suppose it wouldn’t be too bad to get a little payback.”}

"It may not be gratuitous violence, but it'll be fun." Dabi grins.

{“Yes!!!” Mei pumped her fist and hugged him, causing him to turn bright red as the rest of the class laughed at him. “Oh, we’re gonna have so much fun! I’m gonna make so many little nuisance babies!”}

"So many ideas!" Mei cheers.

{Someone clearing their throat behind them made the class freeze and they turned around to see Midnight standing in the doorway, looking like she’d just arrived, “You’re not being naughty, are you?”}

"Yes they are dear." Midnight laughs.

{Izuku and Mei shared a panicked glance before he sat up straight and gave a bright smile, “No, Ma’am! Or at least, I wasn’t, I’m already in my seat! Everyone else, however…”

The class rushed to find their seats as Midnight laughed at their reactions. Izuku smiled and took out a new notebook, simply labeling it *nuisance*. He’d known this year was going to be fun.}

"You really just threw them under the bus." Uraraka snickers.

"They can handle it." Izuku blushes.

"Yeah, okay, shut up, it's time for the disaster that is us teaming up." Shinsou drawls.

"Oh yeah, that'll be great, everyone hush." Izuku brightens. Their friends smile and laugh at them but are quiet anyway.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out Rogue's Gallery on Discord

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Making plans

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Introductions

{Mom fretted in the doorway as Izuku organized his notes and papers so that Shinso wouldn't be too overwhelmed when he arrived. Thankfully, he didn't seem like the type who scared too easily, or else Izuku would have already ruined all chances for their...friendship? Partnership? Whatever it was before it even began. It wasn't his fault that he got so excited! It hadn't even occurred to him that Shinso might not be nearly as excited as he was about using fear to become a different kind of hero. To Izuku, the realization felt like it had completely turned the world on its head. Becoming a hero like All Might had always felt like an impossible mountain he needed to climb and every person who called him weak or useless, just because he didn't have a quirk was yet another boulder that he needed to scramble over just to find the path, not to mention actually climbing the mountain. Once he stopped worrying about being liked, though, it was like someone had taken dynamite to the road and blown all the boulders to shreds. It was still an uphill battle, but now it was doable. If he didn't have to be liked, then all that he had to do was be hated and Izuku had *plenty* of experience with that.}

"That is beautifully tragic." Tokoyami nods.

{For the first time in his life, *I'm going to be a hero* felt less like a dream and more like a promise, and even if it was a little selfish, he really hoped that Shinso felt the same way. It would be a lot

easier to be a hero if he actually had someone rooting for him.}

"I know what you mean." Shinsou sighs.

{The doorbell rang and Izuku leapt to his feet, “I’ll get it!”

Mom pursed her lips as he pushed past her and Izuku felt a pang of guilt. She was always a bit disappointed whenever he got a renewed sense of hero fervor and he was pretty sure that she was secretly hoping that he’d come home one day and announce that he’d decided on a more sensible, safer career. However much he hated worrying her, though, he hated the idea of being useless even more, so hopefully, she’d at least be proud of him.}

"She should be." Uraraka huffs.

{Shinso looked bored when Izuku opened the door, but his stance was guarded, so Izuku suspected that it was an intentional move, kind of like how Izuku sometimes smiled to hide how nervous he was. Izuku grinned brightly and grabbed Shinso’s arm. If he was feeling anxious, then Izuku would just have to show him that there was nothing to be nervous about, “Come on in! I’ve been waiting for you!”}

"You can tell?" Shinsou asks.

"Anxiety disorder." Izuku deadpans.

"Fair enough." Shinsou concedes.

{Shinso didn’t say anything, but he did nod and take off his shoes, so Izuku kept rambling to fill the silence, “My room is this way. I hope you don’t mind that I’ve kinda been getting a head start on some research.”

Shinso was already starting to lose a little bit of his bored expression, “Research?”

Izuku shrugged, “Like tactics and strategy, you know? Like how fear tactics have been used in the past! Some of them obviously rely on a lot of violence, so those aren’t really something we want in our arsenal, but we should still know they exist and maybe we can find a way to modify them to fit our goals a little better.”

Shinso raised an eyebrow, “So basically you’ve been studying villains.”}

"He's gonna use our tactics against us." Twice worries **"We won't fall for it!"**

"Should be fun to see." Dabi muses.

{Izuku blushed, “Not *just* villains…”

“Good,” Shinso smirked. “How else are we supposed to scare them out of their minds if we don’t know what they’re used to? I like the idea of turning their own tricks against them. It’s like...intentional karma.”}

"Karma's only a bitch if you are." Mei grins.

{Izuku blinked, “I...I hadn’t thought of it like that.”

“Um, Izuku?” Mom said softly. “Is this your friend?”

“Yeah!” Izuku stepped to the side so she could see him better. “This is Shinso!

Shinso gave her a little wave and Izuku realized he was probably used to introducing himself silently so that he didn’t make anyone uncomfortable with his quirk. Izuku understood. He didn’t often introduce his quirk at first because he was afraid of how people would react, but he didn’t have to worry about people getting scared, just hostile. He just wished that Mom hadn’t looked so grateful that Shinso stayed quiet.}

"Mom." Izuku whines.

"It's fine I'm used to it." Shinsou dismisses.

"You shouldn't have to *be* used to it." Uraraka growls.

"And yet I am." Shinsou sighs.

{He probably shouldn’t have told her about Shinso’s quirk, but when he’d said that he was inviting a friend over, she’d wanted to know everything about him. Izuku had, as usual, gotten too excited and started rambling about how cool Shinso’s quirk was, because it *was*, and how it was going to be so useful when they were heroes. It wasn’t until he saw the terrified look on her face that he realized she might see Shinso as a threat and not an ally. Instantly, he started being more vague, but the damage had already been done. At least he’d managed to convince her to let

him come over still, but realistically he knew that Mom only allowed it so that she could supervise them instead of letting Izuku go off to meet with his dangerous new friend somewhere where she couldn't protect him. It wasn't fair, but Izuku was going to become just as dangerous as Shinso was and prove that he didn't *need* her protection. They were going to be amazing heroes.}

"Having to prove yourself to your own mother..." Momo sighs.

"He'll do it without a doubt." Jiro says confidently.

{Mom smiled nervously at Shinso and turned back to Izuku, "Um, ok. Well, keep the door open and I'll be out here if you need anything, baby. Anything at all. Just yell. Ok?"}

"Bitch." Shigaraki mumbles.

{Izuku's heart sank, "Got it."

Mom nodded and stepped aside so that she wasn't blocking the hallway. Izuku didn't say anything else as he led Shinso to his room and closed the door as much as possible so that it was just barely cracked open. He grimaced and turned to Shinso, "I am so sorry."

Shinsou shrugged, "My foster parents are the same way, don't worry about it. I mean, we're trying to turn that fear to our advantage right? That's kinda the whole idea."

Izuku frowned and went to his desk. "I guess so. Ok, um...here's everything I've got so far. Where do you want to start?"}

"You're the one that did the research!" Shinsou groans causing Izuku to snicker.

{Toshinori was a little overwhelmed at the moment. He wasn't ready to retire yet. There were still so many people to save and the world still needed a symbol of peace. Sure, Nedzu had pointed out that teaching wasn't *really* a retirement, but Toshinori still felt like he was being forced away from the front lines. He had to face the truth, All Might was past his prime.}

"Had been for years now." Gran Torino snarked.

{Still, retirement or not, Toshinori knew that he wouldn't be able to really rest until he had found a successor. One for All was a sacred power and the next symbol of peace would be able to care for the world in his place, so it was his responsibility to nurture their progression and encourage them to become the shining pinnacle of justice he had once been. The only issue was, well, *finding* the perfect successor.}

"Without sacrificing their individuality." All Might adds.

{Toshinori put his vibrating phone back in his pocket, deciding to let Nighteye's call go to voicemail. Again. It was impossible to tell whether he was calling about One for All or about Toshinori's new job at UA...well, maybe it wasn't impossible, but that would require actually picking up the phone and talking to him, so it was out of the question. Whatever conversation Nighteye wanted, Toshinori wasn't ready to have it yet.}

"I should've kept in touch." Yagi sighs.

{For now, he needed to focus on finding his elusive successor. He could always wait until classes started at UA and have his pick from among the elite students there, but he couldn't help feeling anxious to find the next symbol of peace as soon as humanly possible. If he could find a first-year *before* they entered UA, then there was a chance they'd be able to receive One for All before classes even started! Yes, that would be the best-case scenario.}

"So the original plan was to wait until he started teaching us." Kaminari realizes.

"That means it could have been any of us." Sero grins.

"Headcase said Clouds doesn't like repetition so we'll see at *least* one of us with it." Ashido bounces.

{He wished he knew who had somehow gotten the sludge villain to run the other day. He had been standing in the crowd cursing himself when the cry went out that All Might was just down the street, so he knew it had been a ruse, but somehow, it had been just enough to get the villain to drop the hostage, which was more than any of the heroes present had accomplished. The child that had started the cry undoubtedly had a good head for strategy and would likely make a good successor, but no one had been able to tell who exactly had been the one to set the plan in motion, so there was no way for Toshinori to find them. Toshinori

was obviously a little disappointed, but the child would undoubtedly become a great hero on their own merits someday, so he couldn't afford to spend too much time worrying about it. He just needed to find someone with a good heart and a strong enough will that…

Toshinori stumbled as he ran into someone, knocking them to the ground. He'd been too wrapped up in his thoughts! He shouldn't have gotten so distracted, some hero he was. He bent over to help the man up, "Oh, I'm so sorry! I wasn't watching where I was going, this is all my fault!"}

"Pay attention to where you're going." Gran chastised.

{"You think?!" A young lady glared at him as she practically pushed him out of the way to help the man up, "Are you ok, Dad?"}

"Holy shit it's me!" Jiro says in surprise.

{The man laughed and rolled his shoulder, "I'm fine. You're stronger than you look, man!"

"Uh...thank you." Toshinori said nervously. "Again, I am so sorry…"

"You better be." The young lady hadn't stopped glaring at him. "You could have hurt him, especially if you've got a strength quirk. Watch where you're going next time!"}

"As passionate as ever I see." Momo teases.

{"Don't be rude, Kyoka, he already apologized." The man smiled. "My name is Kyotoku Jiro, and this is my daughter Kyoka Jiro. And seriously, don't sweat it, I'm just fine!"

"Well, uh, that's good to hear." Toshinori said. "It's admirable that you are so concerned about your father's safety, young lady."

"Well, somebody has to be." Young Jiro muttered. "Goodness knows *he* doesn't care about it enough."}

"Jiro's so caring." Uraraka chuckles.

"We already knew that, kero." Tsu agrees.

{Kyotoku laughed and ruffled her hair, "Well, that's what I have

you for, my little hero. And soon enough the entire world is gonna see it! Once you get into UA…”

Jiro pushed him away, “Stop it, Dad. You’re so embarrassing!”}

Jiro's head is buried in her hands.

{Toshinori perked up, “You’re going to UA?”

“I have to pass the entrance exam first.” Jiro huffed. “But, yeah, that’s the plan.”}

"You'll make it!"
"We love having you with us!"
"Kick some ass!"

{Toshinori considered his next move carefully. This young lady was a bit rough around the edges, but she had an inner fire and protectiveness that reminded him of Nana. She would make a wonderful hero and, with some training, she had the potential to be an amazing symbol of peace too. He also couldn't’ deny that a ten-month head start would give her a huge advantage over if he waited until school began, and since she already had that drive to be a hero...he nodded firmly, mind made up.}

"That's it!? That's all it took!?" Jiro shouts.

"He picked me for jumping into a fight I wasn't at all prepared for." Izuku levels at her "This is a step up in reasoning."

"Well, when you put it that way." Jiro snarks. Their friends snicker at the interaction while Toshinori pouts at the back.

{“I have considerable experience working with heroes, in fact, I’ve worked at All Might’s agency for almost my entire career.” Toshinori smiled softly. “I’d be happy to help train you for the entrance exam if you’d like.”

“Really?!” Kyotoku’s eyes widened. “Well, Kyoka? What are you waiting for? This is the opportunity of a lifetime! You know what I always say: never turn down an adventure! Say yes!”

Jiro just ignored her father and looked at Toshinori skeptically, “And what would this *training* look like?”}

"A question I should have asked." Izuku murmurs.

{“Uh...muscle training, mostly.” Toshinori answered, a bit thrown off. “And quirk training. Who knows, with enough training, your quirk might develop into something else entirely! I have other...resources that, if you choose to accept them, will set you on the path to becoming one of the greatest heroes in the world.”

Jiro frowned for another long moment and Toshinori was terrified she was going to say no until she shrugged, “Well, it’s not like I have another training plan right now, but this had better be worth it, ok? If not, I’m dropping you.”}

Torino laughs "I like this one."

{Toshinori blinked in shock, “O-of course, that sounds reasonable.”

Jiro nodded and her father instantly wrapped an arm around both of them, “Ah, my little girl’s gonna be a hero!”

“Dad…” Jiro blushed. “I’m not a little girl anymore!”

Toshinori smiled. The girl knew how to stand up for herself. Good. He had a feeling he’d made the right choice.}

"This is going to be great." Izuku begins "I wonder how One for All will interact with her quirk? In Mastermind, he couldn't pass it along and in Deku, it seems like Permeation can't be enhanced. Will her hearing be improved further or will she get the physical enhancements or a combination of both? All Might said when Nana got One for All, her Float got powerful enough to be considered flight. And what about the other stories? Who will he choose in Viridian and Cheat Code?" Izuku glances around to see his friends' attention stuck on him while the rest of the room got ready for bed. "Oh, I guess we should turn in for the night."

After a good night's rest, refreshed and ready for more the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out the **Rogue's Gallery** on Discord.

End of day 4

Sleep eat drink practice some self-care

D?ITHSP... Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Deku's first raid and Dadzawa

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I think He's Some Pro...

The Raid

{Izuku checked his weapons for what felt like the millionth time as he and Eraser waited at the police station for the other heroes to arrive. While the raid wouldn't start for a few more hours, everyone was meeting here one last time to go over the plan and make sure everything was ready.}

"That happens for every raid, or at least the one I was part of too." Kirishima mentions.

"So it's standard procedure?" Kaminari asks.

"Makes sense." Sero nods.

{The Doraggo drug cartel was one of the biggest suppliers of black market opioids in Japan, and there was a risk that if they didn't wipe it out all in one go, it would act like a hydra and grow back even stronger than before, so this was a much larger operation than most raids. The cartel had five main bases in Tokyo, so the heroes and police would be split into teams to raid each of them simultaneously. Most of the teams had only two or three heroes, depending on the size of the base, but the team assigned to the main base was much larger because that's where the leaders were.}

"Like what they did to us." Shigaraki grumbles.

{The police hadn't been able to find any information on the leaders and their quirks, just that they would be in the building tonight so they needed Izuku to be on-site to give a live analysis to the heroes. Eraser was coming for much the same reason. It wouldn't matter what quirks the leaders have if they couldn't use them.}

"Ambush is your bread and butter." Mic chuckles.

"It's where I'm most effective so it's only logical." Aizawa says evenly.

{Nighteye had been assigned to read the head villain's future to help make sure they weren't missing anything important, while Mr. Brave and Ms. Joke volunteered to go with them. Nobody had wanted to argue because they were both close to Deku and everyone knew how protective they could get. All in all, their entire little group had been assigned to the same base and Izuku was practically vibrating in nervousness and excitement.}

"We'll kick some ass!" Brave cheers.

"Anything for Eraser." Joke chuckles.

"No." Aizawa deadpans.

{"Are you ok?" Eraser tried to mask his concern behind a raised eyebrow, "You haven't stopped moving since we arrived."

Izuku forced himself to stop bouncing in place, "I'm just a little nervous. I know I've been going on patrols with you guys for a while now, it's just...this is the first time I'm really going to be facing villains, you know?"

Eraser glared at him, "I do *not* know, considering that you have been ordered not to engage."}

"Let's see how long that lasts." Todoroki deadpans.

{Izuku waved his arms wildly, "I know that! I'm not going to pick any fights, I swear! But I am going to be in close quarters with these villains and there's a chance they might come after me if things go south." He unbuttoned one of the pouches on his belt and re-fastened it almost immediately, just so he'd have something to do with his hands, "I'm excited, but I'm also scared, you know?"}

"I'm gonna get him some fidget toys, it sounds like he might need 'em." Ojirou claims, playing with his own tail.

{Eraser's glare softened, "I'd be concerned if you weren't." He sighed. "The fact is that what we do is dangerous. It's worth it to protect people, but there is always the possibility that things will go wrong and we won't make it home. It's always difficult for students to learn that, especially ones who love the idea of being a hugely popular hero. The fact that you're scared is a good sign that you're prepared for what we're going to see in there." He looked away, "I'm proud of you."}

A chorus of teasing coos fills the room as Aizawa pretends not to be embarrassed and Izuku grins sheepishly.

{Izuku's eyes widened, "What?"

Eraser scoffed, but smiled, "You heard me the first time, problem child. If you're going to make me repeat myself maybe you have less potential than I thought you did."

He stiffened as Izuku flung himself forward and wrapped his arms around him. He'd awkwardly lifted a hand to pat the kid's hair when he heard a shutter click and looked up to see Ms. Joke and Mr. Brave standing in the doorway, grinning smugly.

Ms. Joke thumbed through her phone, "Oh, this is prime blackmail material right here!"

Izuku turned bright red as Eraser jumped up and glared down Joke, "Delete it."}

"Never!" Joke cries above the laughter of the audience.

{Ms. Joke, "What Eraser? You don't want all your students to know you're a giant softy at heart?"

She ran away from Eraser as Brave finally collapsed on the floor laughing. Izuku joined in, enjoying the last lighthearted moments before he would finally embark on his first real mission.}

"A thousand yen on Deku jumping in." Uraraka suggests.

"Can we not gamble on my other selves?" Izuku asks.

"It is quite unheroic." Iida agrees.

"Two thousand says he does it twice." Shinsou ignores the complaints.

"Five says Aizawa grounds him." Todoroki adds.

"You are aware he isn't actually his father right?" Mei chuckles.

"Trust us, Todoroki doesn't care, kero." Tsu smiles at their antics.

{“Ok, remember, Deku,” Eraser whispered, “You are supposed to stay with at least one of us at all times. Don’t go off on your own.”

Izuku nodded, “I understand. Don’t worry, Eraser, between all four of you and my mother, no one is going to let me do anything reckless.”}

Snort "Like that's enough to stop him." Jiro jokes.

{Eraser narrowed his eyes, “Problem child…”

Izuku rolled his eyes and sighed, “Fine, I won’t go off on my own, ok *Dad*?”}

Snort
"Ha!"
"Savage."

{Joke had to practically suffocate herself to not give away their position with her laughter as Eraser turned a bright red and tried to hide his face completely in his capture weapon. Izuku smirked and high fived Brave.}

"That's our kid!"
"Little shit!"
"This is amazing!"

{“All right,” Nighteye cut in, “Deku, you and Joke will enter through the vents, Eraser and Brave will go through the front entrance, and I’ll cover the back in case anyone tries to leave. Keep your radios on and alert everyone of any problems you run into.” He looked at the others, who all nodded. “Let’s go.”

Izuku followed Joke up the fire escape and onto the roof, crouching next to a vent that was large enough for them to crawl through. Joke carefully unscrewed the cover and set it to the side, then got on her hands and knees and crawled in, Izuku following

close behind. After a few feet, there was a vertical shaft they had to go down, so Izuku grabbed his grappling hook and lodged it in the wall. Joke grabbed onto his legs and lowered herself into the shaft, pulling Izuku down along with her as he gradually let out the tension. When they landed, Joke shuffled into a side tunnel to allow Izuku room to land and he pressed a button on the side of his gear to release the hook from where it was lodged and retracted the line, then crawled after Joke.}

"So cool." Dark Shadow cheers.

"Indeed." Tokoyami agrees.

{According to his mental map, they were getting close to the center of the building, which was where the leaders were likely to be. Through the radio, they heard grunts and curses as Eraser and Brave entered the building and started to take out the muscle. They followed a faint light and soon arrived at a large vent. Joke looked through for a moment, then flattened herself against the side to allow Izuku to squeeze past just enough to see through the vent.

The vent looked out over a large room with a large desk covered in cash and questionable substances. Behind the desk were two men and a woman and the way they were surrounded by dozens of guards all looking toward the door made Izuku fairly confident that they were the leaders.

“Ok, I have eyes on the leaders,” He said, thankful for the mask that canceled his voice, “There are three of them, but they’re surrounded by about two dozen thugs, so proceed with caution.” Joke started working on unscrewing the vent while Deku observed the people below, “About half of the thugs have mutant quirks, but most of those are standing far away from the door, so they probably don’t know that Eraser is here. Most of the rest were included on the list of members we already gathered. The three leaders are standing away from the door, one of them is a tall red-haired man who looks pretty muscular, but not enough to make me think he has a strength quirk. The second one is also male, but he has a wolf mutant quirk, so most likely fights close combat and uses his teeth as weapons. Be careful of his sense of smell. The last one is a woman with a high black ponytail, she’s short, but looks strong and doesn’t have any physical manifestations of her quirk.”}

"Has he done that to us?" Toga asks.

"Safe bet." Dabi frowns.

{“Understood,” Eraser grunted, “We’re almost at your location.”

“I’ll engage the villains now and try to take out some of the mutant quirks.” Joke said, “That way they’ll be distracted when you burst in.”

Eraser gave the ok and Joke pushed the vent out. It fell to the ground with a large crash and all eyes turned to look as Joke jumped down and started to fight the nearest villains. Laughter filled the air as she used her quirk to pick them off easily and Izuku stayed in the shadows, muttering strategies and observations. The leaders were hanging back from the fight for now, but Izuku knew that probably wouldn’t last long.}

"Okay just watching Joke fight makes me want to laugh." Sato chuckles.

"It is très divertissant." Aoyama agrees.

{All of a sudden, one of the villains slammed his hand into the wall, turning it into magma and Izuku let out an undignified yelp as he fell into the room. He landed in a roll but was right in the middle of the fight.}

"He didn't jump in he was dragged in!" Izuku defends his other self immediately.

{“Deku!” Joke yelled and Izuku shifted into a battle stance and grabbed his knives. He had a lot more training than he had when he’d been attacked on his internship with Joke. A villain tried hitting him with a series of sparks from his hands, but Izuku dodged, then ran forward and slashed the man across his palms. He tried to let loose another stream of his quirk but screamed as the sparks aggravated his injury. Izuku smiled slightly and used the butt of his knife to knock him out before moving on to his next opponent.}

Bakugo's eyes widen, and his jaw drops just barely.

{“You can’t win this, you know that.” A man said and Izuku turned to see the red-haired leader slowly advancing on him, “You might as well give up now.”

Izuku was filled with despair. Of course, they couldn't win! He was just a quirkless Deku and he was here with, what? Four heroes? What did they think they could do against one of the biggest drug operations in Japan, especially when they all had such cool quirks. Before he knew what he was doing, Izuku had dropped the knife and held up his hands in surrender.}

"What the fuck!?"
"Why's he giving up!?"
"Is that a quirk!?"
"It has to be a quirk!"
"Keep fighting!"

{Wait. Why was he surrendering?

He shook himself and looked around to see Eraser glaring down at the red-haired villain and it clicked, "The red-haired villain has some kind of persuasion quirk. I think he can convince you of any lie he tells. He told me that we couldn't win and I didn't even think to disagree. Keep your quirk on him, Eraser, I'm gonna knock him out."}

"That's one." Uraraka cheers

{"Deku!" Eraser yelled, probably to tell him to not run toward the stupidly dangerous villain. He was probably right, but Izuku ignored him as he grabbed his other knife from its holster and switched it into his right hand as he ran toward the villain, who was rambling, trying to convince him to give up. Izuku used his small size to his advantage and crouched to slash at the man's stomach. When he jumped back to dodge the knife, Izuku leveled a kick at his knees, making him stumble so that Izuku could reach his head and use the same trick he'd used earlier to knock the man out with the butt of his knife.}

"*Damn*, that was smooth." Kaminari grins proudly.

{"Note to self," he muttered, "add some kind of tranquilizer to the costume."}

"On it!" Mei cheers.

"I don't..." Izuku stops himself "...have fun." he tells her.

{"Deku, are you ok?" Brave yelled, he was currently fighting the wolf mutant leader, who had jumped in front of the woman

leader, growling about how he needed to protect his boss.

“Yep, I’m just down a knife for now,” he replied. A movement in his peripheral vision caught his eye and he saw the woman slipping out through the now-destroyed side wall, “Guys, the main leader is getting away, I’m gonna follow her.”}

"And that's two." Shinsou smirks.

{“Deku!” Eraser swore, knocking out his villain and chasing after the kid, “Seriously, problem child? What did we specifically tell you *not* to do?”}

"Welcome to my life." Aizawa sighs.

{The woman led him through a maze of hallways before suddenly turning around and facing him, “Big mistake, hero.” She jumped and bounced off the wall, coming around to kick Izuku in the kidneys.

“Some, ow! Some kind of elasticity quirk.” He muttered as she continued bouncing around and hitting him, “Most likely not very good at fighting without it, considering how, ow, engrained it is in her fighting style.”}

"Perfect for sensei." Shoji comments.

{Suddenly she started laughing, “Nice of you to join us, Eraserhead.” Izuku looked behind him to see Eraser standing in the hall. “However, you’re out of luck.” She stuck her bottom lip out in a fake pout, “Too bad you can’t erase my quirk without erasing your friend’s as well.”}

"Bitch, you thought!"
"Bet!"
"Hahahaha!"
"Oh, really!?"

{Izuku’s eyes lit up as Eraser gave a terrifying smile that was enough to make the woman retreat a few steps, “Good thing my friend is quirkless, then, isn’t it?”

The woman’s eyes widened and she jumped, but immediately fell back to earth as Eraser activated his quirk. Izuku took advantage of her stumbling to run forward and throw her over his shoulder and she hit the cement with a cry. Undeterred, she jumped to her

feet, but Izuku had been right that she wasn't used to fighting without her quirk. She would seemingly forget that she couldn't use it and try to jump around out of habit and would leave a wide opening for Izuku to take advantage of every time that happened.}

"Maybe we should put more focus into quirkless sparing." Iida suggests.

"I'm in." Uraraka smiles.

{All of a sudden, she was wrapped in white fabric and her arms were pinned to her sides. Izuku gave one last kick so that she was lying on her side on the ground and couldn't get any purchase to get out of the bindings.

Eraser used one hand to keep the tension on his weapon as he put in eye drops with the other, "Good work, Deku." He glared down at him. "Also, you're grounded."}

Todoroki smirks. Izuku just glares at him while Shinsou and Uraraka snicker at them.

{"What!?" Izuku yelled incredulously.

Eraser nodded, "We told you *not* to run off on your own, and then you did. Hence, grounded."}

Midnight is cackling "You really went full dad mode!"

"I know isn't it great." Joke cheers.

{"You're not my dad." Izuku said. "You can't ground me!"

Eraser raised one eyebrow, "I mean if you'd prefer I can call your mother right now and give her a play-by-play of exactly what went down so she can ground you herself."}

"Oh, *hell* no!" Izuku pales.

{Izuku waved his hands in front of him frantically, "Alright, alright, I get it, I'm grounded."

Eraser smirked and they both turned as Nighteye came strolling down the hall, "The police have already arrested almost all villains onsite. Which one is the leader?"

Eraser gave a nod toward the woman on the ground and Nighteye crouched in front of her. He touched her cheek, then cupped her chin roughly to force her to look at him, “It appears our information was accurate. There does not seem to be any indication in the future that the cartel will recover.”}

"Nice!"
"Well done!"
"Good job!"
"Whoop!"

{An officer came to retrieve the leader and wrap her in quirk suppressants before taking her outside to the fleet of awaiting cop cars. Izuku and the other hero followed and met Joke and Brave outside along with Detective Tsukauchi.

“Thank you so much for your help, heroes.” He smiled. “Especially you, Deku, we couldn’t have done it without you.”

“But that doesn’t mean I approve of you running after a villain leader with zero warning, Deku.” Eraser said sternly.

“Oh, come on, Eraser!” Joke laughed. “Don’t pretend like you’re not proud of the kid.”}

"Yeah Eraser lighten up a bit." Joke teases.

"Never." he deadpans.

{Izuku smiled widely when Eraser sighed but didn’t deny the accusation, “Come on, problem child, it’s time to go.”

Izuku stumbled after him, “What do we do now? Just go home?”

Eraser turned around quickly and gave a terrifying grin, “Now it’s time for the absolute worst part of hero work.”

Izuku tilted his head in confusion and Eraser’s smile grew, “Paperwork.”

Izuku gulped.}

"Boo!"
"Oh the humanity!"
"Terrible!"
"Horrid!"

"Diabolical!"

Dabi laughs "Pipe down you little savages, we want to see what's up with Mastermind."

The students pout and grumble but concede to the villain's point, and so the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out the **Rogue's Gallery** on Discord.

MM:SFH Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Stain

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

The Hero Killer: Stain

"This will be something." Iida grimaces.

Meanwhile...

"This will be amazing!" Toga cheers.

{“Mastermind.” Izuku looked around and saw a pair of red eyes staring at him from the darkness.

“Well, I should hope I’m recognizable by now,” he said cockily, “I am pretty high profile.”}

"Ego does *not* look good on you Deku." Uraraka comments.

"Agreed." Izuku responds.

{“You’re the one who killed All Might.”

Izuku smiled behind his mask and threw his arms out to his sides, “With pride. What can I do for you?”}

"Wasn't Stain an All Might fanatic?" Todoroki asks.

"So this is gonna escalate." Shinsou winces.

{“You can die!” All of a sudden three knives shot at him from the

darkness. He managed to dodge the first two, but the third grazed his cheekbone before clattering to the ground. His brain kicked into overdrive as he turned to look at his attacker.

His eyes widened when he saw Stain, the hero killer. He knew that Stain had been known to kill villains, but that was back in his vigilante days, now he mostly targeted heroes. Well, except for him, apparently.

Izuku quickly picked up the knife that had dropped and wiped off the blood as best he could. He didn't know how the hero killer's quirk worked exactly, just that it involved blood and paralysis, but the odds were that there was some sort of blood ingestion requirement for activation like most blood-related quirks. He pulled his mask up a little higher to cover the cut on his cheek.}

"That'll barely slow him down." Izuku murmurs.

"How would you know?" Mei asks tactlessly.

Izuku sighs "Spoilers, probably."

{"So, are you gonna tell me what I did to get on your hit list?" Izuku asked. Stain was known to be long-winded, so hopefully, he'd monologue for long enough for Izuku to figure out a way to either kill Stain or run away.

"You killed All Might!" All of a sudden, Stain was right next to him, grazing his arm and licking the blade before Izuku could stop him. Izuku fell to the floor as his body gave out on him and he tried to calm his breathing. Stain's quirk had a time limit, Izuku knew that much. He swallowed and hoped his intel was correct about how much Stain liked monologuing.}

"I love my fans, but I hate fanatics." All Might says.

"Easily the worst part of limelight heroics." Miruko agrees.

"I haven't had personal experience with it yet but the *stories*." Hawks shivers.

"One good thing about being Japan's Number One asshole is no one has been foolish enough to act in my name." Endeavor huffs.

{"You kill heroes too, we're not so different, you and I!"

“All Might was the one true hero among the scum. He was the only one worthy of the title of hero. The heroes I killed were selfish beings pretending to do what was good for society when in reality they are only furthering their own ends. They needed to be weeded out for the good of society. The heroes I killed sent a message to the ones that remain that they need to improve or else fall victim to my blade.”}

"Bullshit." Izuku huffed.

{“And you believe that All Might’s death sends the wrong message?” Izuku tried to move his fingers to no avail.

“It sends the opposite message. Killing All Might was an act of senseless violence and for that, you must die. By killing All Might, you have not made hero society better, you have deprived it of its crown jewel. There is nothing left worth keeping, all that’s left is trash! Don’t you understand what you have done?”}

"Bullshit." Shigaraki growls under his breath.

{Izuku’s panic was starting to bubble up underneath his calm façade. This was it. This was how he died. He kept trying to move his fingers, but it felt like he wasn’t even trying. He closed his eyes, preparing for the end, and then...his finger twitched. Izuku resisted the urge to laugh hysterically. It felt like he was moving through taffy, *but he could move.*}

"I don't know who to root for." Dark Shadow groans.

"Same." Dabi snorts.

{“It’s scum like you who make it necessary for me to stain my hands with the blood of the unworthy. You are what is wrong with society.”}

"Does he ever shut up?" Jiro groans.

"Apparently not." Momo huffs.

{Izuku looked up at Stain but didn’t move. It seemed he couldn’t feel it when his quirk wore off. Izuku could use that to his advantage. Stain moved around as he spoke and at one point he looked up at the sky.

“I have judged you and found you unworthy of life…” Izuku

quietly stood and quickly made his way behind a nearby dumpster. He held his breath as Stain looked back to where he should be.

“Shit! He must be type O.” He looked in either direction before gathering up his knives, “No matter, he can’t have gotten far. My blade will still taste his blood tonight.” And with that, Stain hurried out of the alley in search of his prey.}

"Fucking dumbass."
"Hahaha."
"He looks so stupid!"

{Izuku waited for several long minutes before breathing a sigh of relief and coming out of his hiding place. He quickly took off his jacket and mask, hiding his knives inside like he had when he had escaped the hero raid. It was far too dangerous for Mastermind to be on the streets tonight.}

"He's gonna come back with a vengeance." Twice claims "**And get his ass kicked.**"

{Izuku made his way back to base, he thought through the fight. Stain would find him again soon enough, and when he did, only one of them would make it out alive.}

"Shivers." Dabi grins.

{“No.”

“Come on, Stain, be reasonable! We both want to destroy the things we hate.”

“No,” Stain pulled out another knife, “You want to destroy the things you hate, I want to change society for the better. You have no vision, as evidenced by your killing the only true hero in this godforsaken society.”}

"You really biffed that meeting with Stainy." Toga giggles earning herself a growl from Shiggy.

{“Please Stain,” Kurogiri said, “We can change society together.”

Stain shook his head, “I will let you live because I think you truly are trying to change society, but if I ever run into Mastermind

again, he will taste my blade. Killing All Might will lead to all the wrong changes and it is unforgivable.” He sheathed his blades, “Take me back to Hosu, Warp Gate, I still have business there.”}

"Unfortunately." Iida sighs.

{Shouto Todoroki watched Iida brush off Uraraka as she tried to talk to him. He’d originally thought it was strange that Iida was going to intern in Hosu because that's where his brother was attacked, but then he’d seen Iida’s eyes.

His eyes were full of the same hatred that Shouto felt swirling inside of him. Ever since Midoriya had made him aware of it, he just hadn’t been able to ignore the feeling. He felt it constantly to where sometimes it was all he could think about. After years of feeling numb, the anger felt...nice? Shouto knew that he should probably talk to someone about this, a therapist or something, but Endeavor was the number one hero now. Who would ever believe that he had spent years abusing his wife and children, just because of some one-sided rivalry with All Might?}

"We do."
"Us."
"Anyone with a brain."

{Shouto couldn’t talk to anyone. He couldn’t fight Endeavor and win. So if Iida had something he could do to get rid of this festering anger inside him, who was Shouto to get in the way? He silently wished Iida luck as he watched him leave. Hopefully, he’d find what he was looking for.}

Todoroki winced at the thought. Iida scowled at his on-screen counterpart.

{Shigaraki scratched at his neck as he overlooked Hosu at sunset, “That stupid hero killer. Who does he think he is? I’ll show him the change we’re capable of!”

“Are you sure you wouldn’t prefer to consult with Mastermind before we enact our plan?” Kurogiri asked, “He has helped us in the past.”

“You don’t need a strategist if all you’re doing is causing chaos, Kurogiri.” Shigaraki replied. “Warp in the Nomu!”

As Kurogiri complied, Shigaraki smiled and looked out at the still-peaceful city, “I’ll show them all! By this time tomorrow, everyone will have forgotten about Stain’s pathetic changes!”}

"If only." Many of the heroes disagree.

{Izuku cracked his neck as he left the meeting. Hosu was quite the journey from his home base, so he tried to make any prospective clients come to him if they wanted a face-to-face meeting, but this gang had the potential to be a big client and Izuku decided to invest a little effort into making sure they had a good relationship. And this way, he’d be able to take care of his little Stain problem.}

"How the turn tables." Kaminari grins.

"What?" Bakugo stares at him.

"It's a meme." Ashido waves him off to which he rolls his eyes.

{Now all Izuku needed to do was wander a bit and see if he could find the hero killer. All of a sudden, he was blown slightly off course by an explosion and he panicked. What was Katsuki doing here? He was supposed to be interning with Best Jeanist in another city!}

"That is a PTSD response." Hound Dog growls "Does he do that in class?"

"I don't actually know." Aizawa furrows his brow.

"They tend to avoid each other unless assigned together so it's rather hard to tell." All Might agrees.

"Something to ask him about." Hound Dog grumbles.

{Izuku looked around quickly and sighed when he saw a group of heroes fighting a Nomu. Ah, it was just the league. He idly wondered what Shigaraki was trying to accomplish by letting them loose in Hosu, of all places, and then decided it didn’t matter. What the League chose to do with their resources was their own decision, Mastermind only needed to worry about it if they paid him.}

"That's fair." Shigaraki shrugs.

{In fact, the League's interference only made things easier, Izuku thought as he headed away from the action. Stain would be somewhere quiet, apart from the chaos, most likely in an alley.

None of the heroes noticed Mastermind as he quietly began his search for the hero killer.}

"Oh come on!"
"It stops there!?"
"Damnit!"

"Next chapter! Next chapter! Next chapter!"

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out the *Rogue's Gallery* on Discord.

V:TGG Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

The great escape

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Investigation

{Shouta looked over the file for the crab villain as he waited for Tsukauchi to arrive so they could interrogate him. Of all the trigger dealers he'd shaken down over the past few years, most just evaded his questions and a few tried to run, but no one else had shot up before he had the chance to ask a single question. In Shouta's line of work, a reaction like that meant that the person had something to hide.}

"That is hella sus." Kaminari agrees.

{According to his files, the crab villain was named Jun Hamasaki and some mid-level dealers had pointed Shouta his way, saying that he sold them the drugs. He couldn't be anywhere near the top, he didn't have anywhere *near* enough connections to bring the drugs over from America, but he was the highest-level dealer Shouta had found so far. Everything pointed to Hamasaki knowing something.}

"Now to just get him to talk." Tsukauchi sighs.

{Which is why he had fought tooth and nail, even against a kid like Viridian. Shouta took a deep breath and reminded himself that trigger often induced rage, so Hamasaki probably hadn't been thinking entirely clearly when he almost killed Viridian. Shouta tried to ignore the voice in his head that said that he'd

been thinking clearly when he dosed himself, and he clearly knew what would happen. It wouldn't do any good to punch Hamasaki in the face the moment he entered the interrogation room, but that didn't mean Shouta had to like the guy.}

"Self-control is a well-tested skill in a life of conflict." Tokoyami nods.

{Tsukauchi calmly walked through the door to the station and put his trench coat on the chair at his desk, "Sorry I'm late, Eraser. I was having lunch with an old friend."

Shouta grunted in response, "Are you ready?"

Tsukauchi nodded and took the file, then led Shouta to the room where Hamasaki was waiting. They had to pass through the observation room first, which meant that Shouta got a good look at the villain through the glass. He had been expecting the guy to be defiant, considering how hard he'd fought to avoid being arrested, but instead, Hamasaki was pale and jittery. He looked terrified.}

"Whoever his boss is must be a piece of work." Dabi huffs.

{Tsukauchi saw him staring, "He's been like that ever since you brought him in. We've tried telling him he's safe here, but he obviously doesn't believe us. It definitely lends credence to your assumption that he actually knows something."

Shouta nodded and followed Tsukauchi through the door. They both sat down at the table opposite Hamasaki, who looked even worse close up. One of his hands was tapping at the table and a thin sheen of sweat coated his forehead despite the fact that the room was air-conditioned. He had information, that much was certain, the only problem now was getting him to talk.}

"We get to see interview strategies." Todoroki says blankly.

"That'll be useful." Shinsou drawls.

{"Alright, you know why you're here." Tsukauchi began. "Eraserhead picked you up a few days ago for trigger possession and assaulting a pro-hero, both of which have prison sentences attached. However, the law is willing to be lenient and take time off your sentence if you provide us with useful information."

Hamasaki shook his head, "I don't know nothing."

“You fought tooth and nail to avoid answering my questions.” Shouta said dryly. “Who sells you the trigger?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Hamasaki glanced up at the camera and Shouta frowned. Was he scared of dirty cops? That couldn’t be. Sure, the trigger operation was growing, but villains had to have a significant amount of power to pull a cop to their side and that took time. Trigger had only been in Japan for a few years, so he had to be scared of someone else.}

Shigaraki glanced at Headcase and raised an eyebrow choosing to remain silent at her nod.

{“We could try to find a way to sweeten the deal.” Tsukauchi tried. “Surely there’s something that would make your life more comfortable behind bars. Maybe protective custody?”

“Doesn’t matter how comfortable a cell is if you never live to see it.” Hamasaki muttered.}

"Harsh." Sero frowns.

{“We have the resources to protect you.” Shouta said. “Whoever’s behind trigger, they can’t be powerful enough to reach you in witness protection.”}

"Though it's not a guarantee." Midnight sighs.

{“You’re underestimating him.” Hamasaki said darkly. “You think it’s just some guys in their mom’s basement, but that couldn’t be farther from the truth. You don’t know what you’re dealing with.”

Shouta looked at Tsukauchi, who leaned forward, “Then tell us. Who are you so afraid of?”

“I…” Hamasaki hesitated, then slammed his mouth shut. “No. I’m not saying nothing else.”

“Well then I guess we’ll just have to learn the hard way.” Tsukauchi stood up. “Come on, Eraser. This guy obviously doesn’t want to tell us anything. It’s his fault if we die because we didn’t know who to avoid.”}

Hagakure gasps "Wow."

{Shouta stood. He wasn’t sure Hamasaki was going to be so easily

manipulated, but Tsukauchi had already made his move and, well, it was worth a try. They certainly weren't going to get anything by bargaining.

To his surprise, they had hardly opened the door to leave when Hamasaki spoke up, "No one's ever seen him."

Shouta and Tsukauchi shared a glance, then closed the door and sat back down.

"It's just one man?" Tsukauchi asked. "Behind the whole trigger operation?"}

"That's a tad unbelievable." Momo furrows her brow.

{"It's bigger than you think." Hamasaki said softly. "It's not just trigger, but...just stop looking into it. He's too powerful, you'll never stand a chance."

So the man behind the Japanese trigger operation had a fearsome reputation. It wasn't the first time Shouta had run into a villain who used his reputation to make sure people didn't fight back. Most of the time, those guys were all bark and no bite. They talked up their quirks and connections, but were B-ranked villains at worst, not the s-ranked ones they made themselves out to be.}

Shigaraki chuckles.

{"Do you have a name?" Tsukauchi asked. "So we know who to avoid."

Hamasaki shook his head, "Nobody knows his name, but...they call him the symbol of evil."}

"All for One that figures." Izuku groans.

Yagi sighs "Should have known."

"Sensei has done a lot of things." Shigaraki shrugs.

{Shouta narrowed his eyes. The symbol of evil. Like a play on the symbol of peace? No wonder people were so scared of this guy if he made himself out to be All Might's equal. He glanced over at Tsukauchi, surprised to see fear in his expression as well. He had to know that this symbol of evil was bluffing, right?}

"You've known about All for One for a long time haven't you?" Aizawa

turns to Tsukauchi.

"It's hard to keep secrets from me." The shrugs back.

{Suddenly, a piercing alarm split the air, making all three of them flinch. Sansa came running into the room not a second later, fur on end as he yelled, “There’s a villain attack right outside! We need all hands on deck!”}

"Who would start shit in front of a police station!?" Bakugo shouts annoyed.

{Shouta swore and ran outside, hands already on his capture weapon. There was a small crowd outside and civilians were screaming as they ran away from the dozen or so minor villains that were attacking at random like they were trying to do the greatest damage in the least amount of time. The media vultures were already starting to pull up and film, though they at least had the good sense to stay away from the main fight.}

"Say what you want about the vulture but they *do* have common sense." Mic sighs.

"Sometimes." Aizawa grumbles.

{The villains were more like thugs, but there were still enough of them to be dangerous if Shouta didn’t take them down quickly. He activated his quirk and looked at the closest one, some guy will bullets shooting out of his fingers, then quickly wrapped him up and flung him toward the waiting police, then started in on the next one.}

"Wasn't that guy at the USJ?" Sero asks.

"There were a lot of guys at the USJ." Kirishima sighs.

"Yeah, we'll probably see some before then." Ashido agrees with both boys.

{Rock Lock had turned up while Shouta had been fighting, so he managed to take one of the villains down by locking a rope in place around him. Between the two of them, it only took them another ten minutes to round up all the villains and get them into police custody. It wouldn’t have taken so long if there weren’t so many of them. Gangs hadn’t been a problem since All Might became number one, so how had so many thugs decided to attack

the police station at the same time? They had to be pretty stupid to attack a place that they knew was filled with police. Even if they weren't scared of the cops, pro-heroes were always in and out of the station, so why attack? It just didn't make sense.}

"Villains hardly ever think things through." Endeavor rolls his eyes.

"Hate to agree with a flaming trash can yet I must." Miruko sighs sarcastically.

{Slowly, they managed to get all the villains off the street and into the holding cells inside the station. There was going to be so much paperwork! Thankfully most of it would be done by the police themselves, but still, Shouta wasn't looking forward to it. That could wait, however, until he and Tsukauchi finished interrogating Hamasaki.

The attack had terrible timing. They had just been starting to get useful information when they'd both had to leave to handle the attack, so hopefully, they'd be able to just pick up where they left off, though Shouta wasn't getting his hopes up. It had been a miracle they'd been able to get as much as they had out of the guy, and the attack would probably have spooked him silent. It was annoying.

He tracked down Tsukauchi and together they made their way to the interrogation room. Shouta almost didn't bother looking through the window before entering, but when he did he had to do a double take. He looked to Tsukauchi to make sure he wasn't seeing things before they both swore and barged into the empty room.}

"Where the fuck did he go!?"
"How!?"
"Did someone move him!?"

{"This is the same interrogation room, right?" He asked. "This is where we left him?"

"Yes." Tsukauchi looked pale. "He was still cuffed to the table when we left."

Shouta looked more closely at the room. The cuffs were gone as well, which wasn't normal for an escape. Most of the villains who tried would pick the cuffs, then leave them behind so they wouldn't be slowed down by the dead weight. If Shouta didn't

know better, he'd almost say that Hamasaki had never been there at all.}

"All of One was far-reaching even in hiding as he was." Gran Torino frowned.

{Tsukauchi was already striding back out into the bullpen, "Sansa! What happened to the villain we had in interrogation room six?"

Shouta followed to see Sansa at the front desk looking through the log book, "It says here he was transferred, but that can't be right. The villains were blocking the front entrance, so I suppose they could have taken him out the back, but the attack was taking up almost all of our manpower. The person who transferred him also forgot to sign their name."}

"Forgot." Jiro scoffs.

{"Pull up the security feed." Shouta said. "The cameras must have caught them leaving."

Sansa grimaced, "One of the villains' attacks missed their target and hit the power box. We just barely got the lights back on five minutes ago, but the station was in a blackout for most of the attack."}

"Convenient." Shinsou deadpans.

{"So the cameras weren't recording." Tsukauchi clarified.

"No, sir."

Shouta looked at Tsukauchi and could tell he was thinking the exact same thing. The attack wasn't random, and neither was the power outage. The entire thing had been engineered by someone who didn't want Hamasaki to talk to them. Shouta had been wrong. Whoever was behind the trigger operation was more powerful than he'd thought possible.

And the only lead he had was the symbol of evil.}

"Poor sensei, he's going to have so many headaches." Ojirou sighs.

"At least it's not our fault this time." Sato comforts.

"Yet." Koda corrects.

The next chapter loads quickly with the quiet murmurs falling silent.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Check out the **Rogue's Gallery** on Discord.
https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Staff room gossip.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Potential

{Maijima walked into the staff room after school and made a beeline for the couch, face planting onto it with a groan, “Eraser, never let me give you a hard time about your problem children again.”}

Aizawa smirks at the man.

"Oh shut up."

{Aizawa snorted, but didn’t even look up from the paper he was grading, “Serves you right.”

“You have problem children this year?” Yamada grinned as he looked up from his own paperwork. “That must be fun! What are they like?”

Maijima lifted his head off the couch just enough to look him in the eye, “You’ll know soon enough. They’ve decided to use one of your students as an extra credit project.”

Nedzu hid his smile behind his teacup, knowing full well exactly which students Maijima was talking about. Of course, he hadn’t had a chance to peek at the cameras for class 1-F just yet, he still had a school to run after all, but Midoriya and his friend Hatsume had so much chaotic potential that there was little chance that Maijima was talking about anyone else. The only question now

was which student had they chosen as their victim.}

"I don't like that he called me a victim." Shinsou deadpans.

"To be fair I can be a bit much." Izuku shrugs.

"And I'm me." Mei agrees.

{“I’m the homeroom teacher for 1-C.” Yamada said slowly. “What would a couple of support course students want with a Gen-Ed kid?”}

Mic chuckles at his other self "You'll see."

{Maijima sighed in exhaustion and sat up, “They’ve decided that one of your kids is getting into the hero course and that they’re helping him do it.”

“...Can they even do that?” Snipe asked.}

"They can try." Nedzu grins.

{“There’s nothing in the rules against it!” Nedzu said cheerfully. “It might have taken a few loopholes if they were teachers, but since they’re all students, then they’re simply helping their friend, correct?”}

"Nedzu's on board we're doomed." Kaminari sighs.

{“Of course, you know exactly who I’m talking about.” Maijima muttered. “You do know this is your fault, right? If it was just Hatsume, I could handle it, I’ve had plenty of students like her in the past, but whenever she’s combined with *your* protégé…”

“Wait, you have a protégé?!” Yamada yelled, making Aizawa finally look up from his papers to cancel his quirk, not that Yamada noticed or even cared. “You *never* take personal students! What even is this kid?!”

“A hell-spawn, probably.” Aizawa said. “He has to be if he caught the rat’s attention.”}

"Hey!" Izuku pouts.

"You know it's true Problem Child." Aizawa deadpans.

{Nedzu simply smiled and let his faculty form their own opinions.

Many of them already knew about Midoriya and some had even met him, but the few who hadn't were all listening to the conversation with a mixture of curiosity and fear. All Might in particular looked vaguely terrified after the...chat that Nedzu had had with him the other day. Not that the scolding had been undeserved, of course, but it meant that he was probably a bit more primed to be scared of Midoriya's potential and of Nedzu's interest in him.}

"He looks like he's had the fear of god has been put into him." All Might winces at his other self.

"Good." Torino says evenly.

{Nedzu was honestly more disappointed that All Might had forgotten about Midoriya after accidentally showing him his weakness than he was about the whole telling him not to be a hero thing. Nedzu was still a bit upset since heroism had apparently been Midoriya's lifelong dream, but the fact was that he was quirkless. As sad and terrible as it was, Nedzu couldn't pretend that Midoriya wouldn't be at a distinct natural disadvantage not just in combat, but in the flashy popularity contest that defined the industry. It probably didn't matter which hero he had asked, they probably would have given the same answer, so at least All Might had tried to be polite about it.}

"I really did, still terrible to say, but I wasn't malicious." All Might agrees.

{Forgetting about the boy, however, was a much more serious offense. If Midoriya had secretly been a villain or had taken All Might's advice badly, it could have been disastrous for all of Japan. Even if All Might had been 100% certain that Midoriya would never use his weakness against him, the boy's knowledge of it would make him an appetizing target for the many villains that had a vendetta against the number one hero. By not communicating the encounter to anyone, not even Tsukauchi, All Might had put not only himself but also an innocent civilian in danger, which was idiotic no matter what rank he held. Nedzu would have to keep an eye on him while he was at UA to make sure he didn't endanger a student like that again.}

"Both Viridian and Mastermind can attest to such points." Tokoyami rumbles.

{This brought Nedzu to his next concern, which was the heroics exercise he had observed that afternoon. It had been...decent...but All Might obviously hadn't known when it was appropriate to stop a match to prevent undue harm. Teaching students combat was tricky since they obviously didn't yet know how much force was appropriate for certain situations. Some tended to use too little, so afraid of causing harm that they limited their own effectiveness, while others like young Bakugo tended to go overboard and use too much. It was a hard line to balance, especially for someone like All Might who was perfectly capable of punching away all of his problems, but it was one of the most important things that their students would learn over the course of their three years there, which meant that it was something that All Might would need to improve on sooner rather than later. Thankfully, the other teachers would be able to pick up the slack.}

"I appreciate it." All Might informs his coworkers.

{Speaking of the other teachers…

"Honestly, as much as I hate to admit a man is right…" Kayama drawled, "I think Aizawa might be right about this one. It's the green-haired one, right, Nedzu? Midoriya?"

Nedzu nodded and gestured for her to continue as the rest of the teachers leaned forward slightly in anticipation and curiosity.

"When I showed up to teach today, the kid was leading his classmates in a revenge plot against the hero students." Kayama licked her lips and smiled. "It was delicious."}

"Midnight approved!" Mei cackles.

{Nedzu didn't know whether to be proud, concerned, excited, or angry, so he settled on gathering more information before making that decision, "Do you know which student?"

Kayama shrugged, "Not quite sure. I do know he's a first-year and apparently bullied the poor boy. I love their idea of revenge, though! The mischievous little imps are going to do a bunch of subtle things to make the kid miserable, so just look for which of the first years encounters more than his fair share of daily frustrations and you'll have your target."}

"That's gonna be *our* problem too." Ojirou sighs.

{There were easier ways to find the child if one just hacked into the right records. If all went well, as it undoubtedly would, Nedzu would have this boy's name by the end of the night, "And he was a bully, you said?"

"Uh, Nedzu, sir?" All Might said hesitantly. "Please tell me that you're going to stop this rather than joining in…"}

"You poor naïve fool." All Might looks on with pity.

{All Might visibly gulped at the sharp smile Nedzu gave him, "Now, All Might, one of the goals of a teacher is to help one's students accomplish their goals! What kind of a teacher would I be if I didn't give Midoriya any assistance."}

"This is gold." Dabi chuckles with a menacing grin.

{"B-but…"

"Don't bother." Aizawa said. "That kind of pettiness is right up Nedzu's alley, so at least he's only going to be taking it out on one brat rather than the whole of humanity. The only thing he'll have to worry about is the conspiracy theorists trying to accuse the kid of being his secret love child or something."}

Izuku snorts turning to Todoroki just in time to see a quickly hidden scowl.

{"So!" Yamada grinned. "I get to meet the little listener? Which of my students has he adopted?"

"I think Midoriya said his name is Shinso." Powerloader sighed. "He has a brainwashing quirk."

"Ah! Good choice, I approve!" Nedzu chirped. He remembered Shinso from the exams, of course. It was a shame that he didn't get enough points, but despite his and Aizawa's best efforts, the school board had shot down every single one of the alternate exam ideas they had proposed, leaving Shinso in general education until he was able to prove himself during the sports festival.}

"Damn quirkist assholes." Shinsou growls.

{"Brainwashing?" Aizawa asked.

“It’s an intriguing quirk, I can see why Midoriya was drawn to it!” Nedzu chirped. “Young Shinso can control anyone provided that they answer one of his questions.”

“And of course, it’s useless against robots.” Aizawa muttered and dragged a hand down his face. “Please tell your protégé not to only focus on the kid’s quirk. With a drawback like that, he’ll have to be able to fight without it.”}

"Way ahead of you." Izuku grins.

{“Oh, you don’t have to worry about that.” Nedzu dismissed. “I do believe that Midoriya would be the last person to limit a person based entirely on their quirk.”}

"Obviously." Aizawa grins.

{“Oh?” Kayama asked. “And why is that?”

There was a moment of tense silence before All Might, to Nedzu’s surprise, answered, “Because he’s quirkless.”

“That explains it.” Aizawa said after a moment. “If he caught your attention, he obviously doesn't let it limit him. Good. Now let’s see if the other problem child sees it the same way.”}

"If I'm not an idiot." Shinsou grumbles.

"Good thing you're not." Uraraka chirps.

The rest of the squad throws in their two cents as the next chapter loads.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Discord: https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Great theory. Poor execution.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Potential

{It felt like Kacchan was getting worse. Maybe Izuku was imagining it, but ever since he'd gotten captured by the sludge villain, Kacchan was about twice as mean as he had been. He must be compensating for being caught as the victim and trying to regain either a sense of control or a sense of power, but in the end, it didn't matter what had led to the change, it just mattered that Izuku stayed out of his attack radius as much as humanly possible.}

Bakugo groans.

{That wasn't an option during class, unfortunately, especially since most of his teachers would turn a blind eye to Izuku getting tripped, burned, or hurt if it meant that Kacchan wouldn't interrupt class, but after class was when the worst beatings happened anyway, so if he could just stay out of sight for long enough for Kacchan to leave, then Izuku could go hang out with Shinso at the park. He just had to stay out of sight.}

"Easier said than done." Izuku sighs.

"I thought you said Bakugo never went so far as to hunt you down." Uraraka says worried.

"The Battle Trial." He responds; she nods her head in understanding.

{Izuku looked around for somewhere to hide. Inside a locker would be fine if he had a guarantee that he could get out, but if the locker latched and he got trapped, then it would defeat the whole purpose of hiding in the first place. Empty classrooms weren't a safe bet because Kacchan would send his lackeys to check those and if he tried going to a teacher it would just make things worse. If only there were some way to give himself an advantage and take the high ground…Izuku almost stopped in his tracks as it hit him. *Take the high ground.* Sure, Katsuki could easily reach him with his explosions, but that was only if he thought to look up!}

"Please don't look up." Ashido pleads.

{Izuku sped up and skidded around the corner, making a beeline for the trophy case. Kacchan had won pretty much every award the school offered, so his name and face were featured multiple times, while Izuku may as well not be a student. That didn't matter though, what mattered was that the case didn't go all the way to the ceiling. There was about a foot of space on top with a little decorative lip along the edge of the case that should be enough to mostly hide him if he laid down completely flat.}

"Let's hope it hides him." Ojirou comments.

{Izuku grabbed a chair from an empty classroom and used it to try and scramble up the side of the case, accidentally kicking it aside as he did. It took all of his strength to get up on top of it, but he finally managed it with a grunt. It was hard to catch his breath with all the dust, so he covered his mouth and did his best to muffle how hard he was panting. This entire plan would be for nothing if Kacchan heard him and found his hiding place.}

"This is not going to work." Jiro cringes.

{It was only a few seconds after Izuku had settled in that Kacchan and a couple of their other classmates rounded the corner. Kacchan had a murderous expression on his face as he looked down the hallway in both directions, "You extras split up and find that damn nerd. I'm gonna take a look around here."

His lackeys nodded and one took off in either direction while Kacchan started looking around. He peaked his head in each of the other classrooms and Izuku had to fight off the disappointment when he didn't look at any of them for more than

a few seconds. Then Kacchan saw the chair on the floor and his eyes narrowed.}

"Oh, shit." Toga whispers.

{Izuku couldn't help himself as he started trembling. If Kacchan found him, was there anything he could even do? If he was just stronger, then he could have gotten up quicker and not had to use the chair. He shouldn't have left any evidence that Kacchan could use to find him! Hiding had seemed like the perfect plan at the time, but if it didn't work, then it would just make everything worse! He needed to get better at thinking ahead and strategizing for every possibility, not just the one he hoped would happen.}

"You'll learn quick, you always do." Todoroki assures.

{Stupid dust. If he was going to be hiding in places like this frequently, he'd need to start carrying around a mask. Kacchan was getting closer and Izuku clamped his hands over his mouth again as he felt a sneeze coming on. He hated this. He *hated* being so terrified. And as much as he hated it, what made it even worse was that Kacchan didn't even know what it was like. With the exception of the sludge villain, he'd never been the victim. He didn't know what it was like to live in fear like Izuku did.}

"Ouch."
Hiss
"Right in the heart."

{His mind was racing through all the research he'd done since meeting Shinso, and Izuku knew that there were a million and a half strategies that he *could* use, but if he tried them and failed then it would just make Kacchan even angrier than he was right now. Plus there was the fact that Izuku was pretty sure that Kacchan's fight or flight response was mostly geared toward *fight*, which meant that a fake-out strategy wasn't going to work here like it did with the sludge villain. What was he supposed to do?!

Kacchan's eyes slide from the chair to the trophy case to Izuku on top. He gulped. Too late.

"There you are, Deku." Kacchan smirked. "Found you."}

"This is my own personal hell." Bakugo scowls.

{Kyoka wasn't quite sure what to think of her new teacher. Dad was always so gung-ho about taking advantage of new opportunities and *never saying no to an adventure*, but he was also impulsive and had a habit of not thinking things through all the way. So yeah, Dad saw absolutely nothing sketchy about some guy who supposedly worked for All Might offering to train her, but Kyoka was obviously picking up more than a few red flags that merited bringing pepper spray along to her first training session. If Toshinori Yagi hadn't been listed as an employee on All Might's website, she wouldn't have even shown up at all, but a little extra training from someone who actually knew the hero industry would be extremely valuable, so even though she was still pretty sure he was lying about *something*, she had decided to give him the benefit of the doubt. For now.}

Izuku starts laughing hysterically while Jiro stares at the screen in abject *horror*.

{Dagabah municipal beach park. When Yagi had told her the meeting place she'd been expecting more...well, just more. The *park*, if she could even call it that, was so disused that people had started using it as a public dump site and if there had ever been a playground anywhere sound here, it had long since been buried beneath literal mountains of trash.}

"It's not like that anymore." Momo says curious.

{Yagi, of course, blended right in, so it took her a minute to realize that he'd beaten her there and was already standing on the boardwalk, looking out over the ocean. Kyoka wrinkled her nose and winced at every minuscule creak the wood made as she started picking her way to him, "No offense, but this *perfect* training ground you picked is kind of a mess."}

"For now." Izuku says to himself calming down from his hysterics.

{Yagi jumped and gave her a sheepish smile, "Oh, young Jiro! I, uh, didn't see you there."}

"Clearly." Aizawa rolls his eyes.

{Jiro gave him a skeptical look, "So, uh, are we gonna train, or what?"

"Yes! Of course!" Yagi snapped into action and started making his way back to the beach with much less care than she had taken,

most likely because he couldn't hear every concerning creek the wood made as they put weight on it, but they somehow managed to reach the sand without the boardwalk collapsing underneath them. Kyoka breathed a sigh of relief. This was definitely turning out to be an *adventure*.}

"That's sketchy as shit." Kaminari remarks with concern.

{"So, young Jiro," Yagi began, leading her through the piles of trash, "I must admit that I haven't been completely honest with you…"

His form started to shift and Kyoka cursed under her breath and grabbed the can of pepper spray in her pocket. Go on an adventure, Dad said, it'll be a great opportunity, he said. Kyoka swore to god if she got murdered she was going to haunt her father for the rest of his miserable life. She had no idea what kind of quirk this guy had, but from the shift in size, it was most likely some kind of monster quirk. She wasn't equipped to fight that! What could she do?}

"Wait! Please wait!" Jiro shouts at her other self while Izuku is once again losing his shit.

{Yagi had already lured her out of sight of the street, but they were still close enough that if she pepper sprayed him and bolted she might just be able to get away before he recovered. She braced her feet and as soon as the smoke had cleared enough for her to tell where the creature's eyes were, she fired. Bullseye.}

"Noooooo!" Jiro wails as Momo pats her on the back.

{The smoke surrounding Yagi finished clearing and Kyoka's eyes widened as she realized just who exactly she had just pepper sprayed right in the eyes right as he let out a strangled cry and collapsed back into his skeletal form with a puff of steam, "All Might?!"}

If one were to look at where the man in question is sitting, one would see the man burying his face in his hands as those around him either laugh or stare in disbelief.

{"Umm...yes?" All Might coughed up a small amount of blood, making Kyoka feel even worse, "I...I, uh, well, I knew you were, ow, strong enough for my quirk. Where's...my phone...Here, call Recovery Girl?"

Jiro was shaking as she grabbed his phone out of his hand and searched through the contacts. Thankfully, there weren't that many and Recovery Girl was already near the top of his recent calls, "Um...hello? I, uh, think I might have just attacked the number one hero. Sorry?"}

"Nah don't apologize for that!" Toga exclaimed.

"It's his own damn fault for isolating you like that!" Dabi agrees.

"You know you fucked up when..." Twice cuts in **"The villains criticize your shit!"**

{Hitoshi was trying really hard to not feel betrayed. After going over to Midoriya's house, he'd thought that they were at least partners, if not friends, but here he was. At the meeting place. Alone. Midoriya really didn't strike him as the type of guy to be late, so at this point, it was probably safe to assume that he wasn't showing up at all. Maybe he'd wanted to show up and his mom just hadn't let him? That was probably just wishful thinking. It would have been nice if Midoriya still wanted to hang out with him, but he'd probably come to his senses and realized that the whole using fear as a weapon and being associated with someone with a villain's quirk was kind of a bad idea in the first place. Even if it ended up working, it was still a long shot.}

Shinsou winces "Or he was held up by a bully."

{Hitoshi sighed and jumped off the swing he'd been sitting on. He might as well go home and do his homework. He needed to at least make sure he could pass the Gen Ed exam once it was time to apply to UA. He shouldn't have gotten his hopes up.}

"Wait, no! Don't go!" Mei demands.

{"Shinso!" Midoriya's voice made him stop in his tracks. "Sorry, I'm late! I, uh, got held up, but I'm here now!"

Hitoshi looked Midoriya up and down. He was slightly favoring one ankle and his uniform was singed and torn in several places. Plus, Hitoshi was fairly certain that those were bandages peeking out from his sleeves, "Held up by who? Muggers?"}

"Good guess, but no." Sero sighs.

{“No…” Midoriya rubbed the back of his neck, “Just some bullies. I really wish I could just make them go away. I mean, I know *how*, right? But all the study we’ve done is just in theory. I’ve never really had a chance to practice being scary, you know?”}

"How are they gonna pull that off?" Sato asks.

{“And I’ve only ever practiced being less scary.” Hitoshi nodded in understanding. “So...what are we gonna do about that?”}

Shinsou sits up a little straighter in interest.

{“There's gotta be some way for us to practice…” Midoriya had started muttering to himself, so Hitoshi just let him talk and tried to catch as much as possible. “There are haunted houses, but while those might be helpful, they probably won’t hire kids our age. Wait, aren’t their companies that provide civilians for rescue simulations and stuff for heroes in training? I wonder if there are opportunities like that for fake villains…”}

"That would be excellent training." Nedzu agrees.

{“If there is, that’d probably be the best.” Hitoshi cut in. “I mean, the point is to beat the villains at their own game, right? So *pretending* to be villains would probably be a pretty effective way to practice.”}

"To defend the light by embracing the shadows shall be a fascinating undertaking." Tokoyami says with curiosity.

{Midoriya smiled and pulled out his phone, “Ok, let’s start there. We’ll probably need a lot more physical training too, and maybe parkour? It seems like it’ll be really useful to be able to beat villains in mobility and, uh...I kinda tried hiding on top of a display case and rolled my ankle jumping down.”}

"Ouch."

{Hitoshi raised an eyebrow, “Was this before or after you got beat up?”

Midoriya grimaced, “Before. And that reminds me, we should probably learn to fight.”

“Yeah.” Hitoshi nodded. “Yeah, we should probably get on that.”}

"Yeah yeah you should." Bakugo growls in frustration.

Headcase, noticing the lack of discussion quickly starts the next episode.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP... Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

The first day at UA begins!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

UA

{Izuku took a deep breath before stepping through the front gates of UA. He was finally here! He hunched his shoulders slightly, trying to avoid as many other students as possible as he made his way to the main building. Maybe that nice girl Yaoyorozu from the entrance exam would be in his class? Maybe Kachan wouldn't be? Izuku shook his head, he shouldn't get his hopes up.}

"You thought that in our world too didn't you?" Todoroki turns to Izuku.

"Yeah, I did try to avoid Kachan." Izuku nods.

{As he climbed the front steps, he fiddled with the tie that he just hadn't managed to get right before coming to school today. Unfortunately, with his eyes busy looking at his neck, he didn't manage to see the last step. What a way to begin his first day at UA.}

"De ja vu." Izuku chuckles.

{Izuku tried to maneuver his momentum into a roll like Joke always told him to do if he was falling on a parkour run, but instead of the familiar feeling of a cement landing, he found himself turning over and over again in midair.}

"Oops." Uraraka giggles.

{“Oh! I am so sorry!” A girl’s voice said, “I was just trying to catch you using my quirk because I didn’t think falling on the first day of school was a good omen! I’m so sorry, I’ve messed everything up!”}

"God that's adorable." Hagakure coos.

{Izuku had now managed to right himself and was floating in midair, sitting cross-legged and smiling at the trippy feeling of hovering several feet above the ground, “You have some sort of anti-gravity quirk, right? That’s so cool!”}

"Typical." Bakugo snorts.

{She looked at him with wide eyes, “You don’t mind?”}

"Does he ever?" Tsu teases.

{Izuku shook his head, “I’m a little dizzy, but otherwise, this is fun! You have such an awesome quirk!”}

"We should have an anti-gravity party." Ashido schemes.

{The girl smiled and pressed her fingers together and Izuku felt his gravity suddenly return as he landed in a crouch. Must be some kind of five-point contact quirk…

“My name is Ochako Uraraka!” She said as Izuku stood and brushed himself off, “What’s your name?”

“Izuku Midoriya.” Izuku was thankful that being around Joke and her incessant flirting had somewhat desensitized him to talking to women, otherwise, he would be a mess right now! “Umm, where are you headed? What class are you in?”}

"Wait!" Uraraka gasps "Did you even *say* anything when we first met?"

Izuku blushed "In my defense, you are literally the first friend I've had since Kachan turned on me when we were five."

Uraraka giggles a bit "Yeah, okay, I guess that's fair."

{Uraraka smiled, “Class 1A. I really only passed the exam by the skin of my teeth. That zero-pointer was something else, wasn’t it?”}

Izuku chokes on his breath "Yep."

{Izuku rubbed the back of his neck as they started walking, "Actually, I wouldn't know. I was admitted on recommendations, so our exams were a little different. You guys fought robots, right?"}

"Yep."
"That's right."
"We did."

{Uraraka nodded, "Yep, it was insane! There were different sizes and strengths of robots, all worth different point values, but then there was this zero-point robot. You'd think it'd be tiny, right? Just something to trip over and get in the way, but it was the size of some of the buildings! I got trapped under some rubble and had already gone over my quirks limits." She shuddered, "I managed to scrounge up just enough strength to use my quirk to escape and run away before it crushed me, but I ended up passing out for about five hours after the exam. The lecture Recovery Girl gave me was almost as scary as the zero-pointer!"}

"Good." Recovery Girl smiles.

{Izuku laughed, "Yeah, she can be pretty intimidating when people don't take care of themselves. I *really* never want to get on her bad side."}

Izuku coughs.

{They kept chatting idly as they tried to find the 1A classroom without getting lost. They got there a few minutes before the bell and Uraraka opened the giant door easily, probably using her quirk to help. She walked in without hesitation, but Izuku stood frozen by the door.

"It's the first day and you're already scuffing up school property, you cretin!"

"You're kidding me, right?" Kacchan smirked. "Did your old school put a stick up your ass or were you just born that way?"}

"That's a look of dread if I've ever seen one." Shinsou snarks.

"Can you blame me?" Izuku defends.

{Iida sighed, "Let's start over. My name is Tenya Iida and I went to Somei Private…"

“Somei, huh?” Kacchan leaned forward threateningly, “You must think you’re better than. I’m gonna have fun putting you in your place.”}

Bakugo glares at the screen as his eye twitches.

{Izuku gulped, he knew exactly how terrible it was to have Kacchan have to put you in your place. He seriously felt bad for Iida.}

"Sensei will stop him." Shoji nods.

{“Midoriya!” Yaoyorozu waved to him from where she was talking to the ice quirk user from the recommendation exam, “It’s so awesome you made it in! Did you end up having to take the normal exam as well?”

“No, he didn’t.” Iida said. “At least, I didn’t see him there.”

Midoriya stood frozen from all the attention, but smiled hesitantly at Yaoyorozu, “Umm...no, I got in on my first try. It’s good to see all of you again.”

“What the fuck are you doing here, *Deku?”* Kacchan growled.}

"Don't set the school on fire." Aizawa groans.

{Izuku flinched at Kacchan’s tone, but before he could respond, Iida was already speaking, “Oh! *You’re* the famous Deku-san?” He bowed deeply, “My brother Tensei speaks very highly of you.”

“Tensei?” Izuku tilted his head in confusion. He thought for a minute, did he know a Tensei that was related to Iida? A hero maybe? Wait, didn’t he think Iida looked kinda like a pro at the entrance exam? What was the nickname he’d given him...? Mini-Ingenium!

“Oh! Ingenium!” Izuku laughed, “Yeah, he’s fun to talk to. I tend to work more with his underground sidekicks than I do with him, though.”

Kacchan’s scowl deepened.}

"My brother is rather busy." Iida admits.

{Shouta’s normal cup of morning coffee never seemed to be

enough on the first day of school. Already, he'd had to stop four third-year students from pranking the first years, and had to deal with several students accusing him of being lost and wandering into UA by mistake. Yes, he knew he looked like a hobo, but come on! UA's security measures wouldn't allow a random homeless person to just walk in!}

Snort
"Hahahaha!"
"I'm not laughing."
"That's rich."

{He was almost at his classroom. Time to see how quickly this batch of newcomers would notice him. He was just about to grab his sleeping bag when he heard a series of small explosions coming from his class.

"What the fuck are you talking about, Deku?" A loud voice screamed and Shouta suddenly understood exactly what Deku had meant when he said he could just tell who was using his name as an insult, "Why would actual pro-heroes ever want to associate with a quirkless loser like you? Just who do you think you are?"}

"Because he has a decent heart and a kickass mind!" Mei snaps back.

{"Please Bakugo! Such behavior is unbecoming of UA students!"

"Shut up four-eyes!"}

"*So creative.*" Ashido draws out sarcastically.

{"Please, Kacchan!" Deku said, "Just calm down!"

Shouta didn't wait for his students to notice him as he normally did on the first day of school. Instead, he slammed the door open with his quirk already activated and a glare strong enough to kill. Deku was hunching in on himself like he always did when he was feeling anxious and a blond boy was towering over him, hands still smoking from the use of his quirk only moments before. He was staring at his hands in confusion as the rest of the class looked on in shock.}

"Go sensei!" Hagakure cheers.

{"If this is how you think it is appropriate to treat your fellow students," Shouta said, "then maybe you shouldn't be at UA at

all.”}

"Yes!"
"No!"
"Do it!"
"You'll make it worse!"

{Deku looked up at him and shook his head frantically, pleading with his eyes for him not to expel the boy, Katsuki Bakugo if Shouta remembered correctly from the class role he’d been given. Shouta grit his teeth. On the one hand, this kid was the reason that Deku would never truly realize how talented he was and had bullied him for at least a decade. On the other hand, if Shouta expelled the brat now, Deku would blame himself for his expulsion, which wouldn’t be healthy.}

"He's still on thin ice." Aizawa growls.

{Shouta took a deep breath and released his quirk. He would give the brat until the end of the day. Hopefully, by then Bakugo would have given him a concrete reason for expulsion and he could talk to Nedzu. He’d still probably have to talk to Deku and try to prevent him from blaming himself, but that would be more doable if Shouta had a specific instance that day to point to.}

"You're scheming against him." Midnight grins

"It's only logical." he waves her off.

{“Everyone in your seats. This kind of behavior will not be tolerated, nor will wasting time.” He strode to the front of the class. “Rational students would understand that.”

“Huh?” Bakugo sneered, “And just who the fuck are you?”}

Bakugo facepalms "An adult at *UA*, as in a Pro Hero, and one of your teachers."

{Shouta glared at him, but it was Deku who answered, “This is Eraser! I mean, Eraserhead! He’s our teacher!”

Shouta glanced at him softly, “Problem child, when we’re at school, you can just call me Aizawa-sensei.” He looked over at the rest of his students, “For the rest of you who don’t know me, my name is Shouta Aizawa, otherwise known as the pro hero Eraserhead. Deku knows me because we’ve worked together

before. You'll probably find that's a pattern with him. Anyway, let's stop wasting time and just get to it." He pulled out his sleeping bag and retrieved a gym uniform from inside. The drama of that reveal had probably been lost since he didn't arrive to class bundled up, but oh well. "Put these on and head outside, we'll start with a quirk assessment test."}

"Didn't Cheat Code mention something like that?" Toga asks.

"I think so." Twice answers **"Who cares?"**

{He then turned on his heel and walked out of the classroom and down the hall, not waiting for the students to catch up.}

"So we get to see why the great 1A missed orientation." Monoma snarks.

{Izuku shook his head and smiled as Aizawa explained that they couldn't waste time on pointless ceremonies. Classic Eraser. He resisted the urge to chuckle when he saw the other students' confused and terrified faces. They obviously hadn't seen the guy give a stray cat half a sandwich to lure it into his capture weapon so he could take it to the vet.}

"Awwwwww."
"So cute."
"*Sensei*."
Aizawa is not blushing; you have no proof.

{"Here at UA, we're not tethered to traditions. That means I get to run my class however I see fit. You've never gotten to use your quirks in physical exams before, that's just not rational. Bakugo," Izuku hoped he was imagining how his teacher's voice was laced with hatred, "you got the most points on the entrance exam. What was your farthest distance throw with a softball in middle school?"}

"And so it begins." Kaminari whispers.

{"Sixty-seven meters." Kacchan's eyes were lit with a challenge.

"Try doing it with your quirk." Aizawa handed Kacchan an electric softball and motioned for him to stand in a circle that was painted on the field. "Anything goes, just stay in the circle."

Kacchan smirked, “All right, you asked for it.” He wound up the ball, letting it loose with a scream and an explosion, “Die!”

Izuku’s eyes widened, he’d known Kacchan was powerful, but that was something else!

“All of you need to know your maximum capabilities,” Aizawa drawled. His phone beeped as the ball landed and he showed the screen to the students, looking slightly disappointed. 705.2 meters. “It’s the most rational way of figuring out your potential.”}

"So bitter." Midnight teases.

"Like you'd be any better." Aizawa snarks back.

"No." She agrees "But I'm me and you're you." Her grin makes him roll his eyes.

{“Woah!”

“I want to go!” A lively student with pink hair and skin exclaimed, “That looks like fun!”}

"Dun dun *duuuun*." Ashido chuckles at her other self's mistake.

{“Yeah!” Another boy said, “We can use our quirks as much as we want!”

“Fun?” Aizawa said seriously, “Idiots. Today you’ll compete in eight physical tests to gauge your potential. Whoever comes last has none and will be expelled immediately.”}

"Wait he actually did that!?" Kendo exclaims.

"I thought it was just a rumor!" Awase claims.

{The students gasped and Izuku covered his mouth with his hands to hide his smile. Aizawa was trying to scare them into doing their best and making sure they took the exercise seriously. If the last place could still prove they had potential, Aizawa wouldn’t expel them, but they didn’t know that.}

"And we proved ourselves." Jiro grins.

"I can't believe I truly thought he was bluffing." Momo sighs.

{Izuku was tapped on the shoulder by an invisible hand and he looked over to see a floating uniform, “Deku, right? You knew Aizawa-sensei before. Is he really serious about this?”

Izuku carefully schooled his expression and shrugged, “He has the highest expulsion rate of any teacher in the history of UA. He doesn’t have any patience for students with zero potential.”}

"That didn't answer the question." Todoroki deadpans.

{Yaoyorozu looked at him oddly with one eyebrow raised. Apparently, she’d caught onto the fact that he hadn’t really answered the question. He smiled slightly and winked and she nodded and returned the smile. They both turned to look at Aizawa-sensei again.}

"Conspirators." Tokoyami whispers.

{“Wait a minute, ribbit.” A girl with green hair raised her hand, “Bakugo implied earlier that Deku is quirkless. How is it fair to have all of us use our quirks when he won’t be able to?”}

"Seriously?" Hagakure huffs.

{Izuku curled in on himself. He’d hoped to keep his quirklessness a secret for a while longer, but now they were all going to think he didn’t have any right to be in the hero course, especially if he managed to come in last on the assessment test.}

"And there's the anxiety." Shinsou sighs.

{Aizawa only smiled, “Hagakure,” The invisible uniform stood up a little straighter, “is your quirk going to help you run faster?”}

"Nope!" the girl is quick to chime in.

{“N-no, Aizawa-sensei.”

He nodded, “And Mineta, is your quirk going to help you throw a ball farther?”}

"No." The boy huffs.

{A short boy with purple balls for hair shook his head.

“You’ll all realize that while quirks are helpful and influence your potential, they are not everything and will not be useful for every

situation. You have to train both your body and your mind to make up for that. I personally do not think that Deku will get last place even if the rest of you use your quirks, but that is neither here nor there. His strengths lie in his mind. Therefore, in the end, there will be a ninth test. Deku will try to create a strategy for you, as a class, to take me down. If this strategy works, he will be proven to have potential, even if he comes in last in the physical exams. In addition, if any of you do poorly in the physical exams, this strategy exercise will be your last chance to prove to me that it's no mistake that you're here. Understand?"}

"So cool!"
"We can do it!"
"Won't let you down!"

{The students nodded and glanced at Izuku in pity, apparently already writing him off. There was no way that a group of students would be able to defeat a pro. Izuku simply ignored the stares. He wasn't planning on getting last in the physical tests. Aizawa wanted the students to go all out, so that was what he'd get.}

"Make them eat their *pity*!"
"Show 'em up!"
"You fools!"
"Deku Deku Deku!"

The chant spreads as Headcase loads the next chapter.

"Deku Deku Deku Deku Deku Deku Deku Deku!"

Headcase claps for attention "Let the next chapter *begin!"*

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https//discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

The fight with stain.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Mastermind vs. Stain

{Iida shielded his head as a katana came out of nowhere, blocking his kick, removing his helmet, and knocking him to the ground.

“This is no place for a child.”

Iida stood and let Stain see the rage in his eyes, “Blood red scarf, knives all over your body. You’re Stain, the hero killer! I’ve been looking for you, but I didn’t think I’d find you so soon.”}

"That's what you won't tell us about Hosu!?" Uraraka turns on Iida.

"You went after stain!?" Mei cries. Tsu stares him down as Shinsou gapes.

"And what do *you two* have to do with this?" Uraraka rounds on Izuku and Shoto.

"We signed NDAs we can’t talk about it." Izuku defends.

"But Headcase can." Todoroki adds.

All eyes turn to Headcase as she smiles smugly glancing at Endeavor relishing the resigned dread on the man's face. "The Hero Killer: Stain was defeated by Midoriya Izuku, Todoroki Shoto, and Iida Tenya. However..." She pauses ensuring no one interrupts her before continuing "...as they were not licensed at the time they would have

faced a vigilantism charge if they did not give the credit to..." She grins "...Endeavor."

"Motherfucker!"
"Why him!?"
"Damnit!"

{Stain leveled his katana at Iida's face, "Your eyes are searing with vengeance. Be careful what you say next, for even someone your age could be my target."

Iida clenched his fists as rage and hatred clenched his heart, "Are you saying I'm not even a threat to you?" He met Stain's eyes. "My brother is a hero who you attacked! He was the best older brother anyone could ask for. I have come to stop you because *he can't anymore*. I'm going to make sure you remember my name for as long as you live. I am Ingenium and I *will* defeat you!"}

"Look I know the whole 'avenging angel' thing is a big no no, but that was a *line*." Kaminari grins.

{"Then so be it," Stain said, "die."

Iida leveled a kick at the hero killer, who dodged and returned with a kick of his own, knocking Iida to the ground. Before he could even think to move again Stain's katana was buried in his arm.}

Hiss
"Ouch."
"He'll be okay right?"

{"So you're Ingenium's brother. You don't deserve to call yourselves heroes. You're fakes, the both of you."

Iida grit his teeth, "My brother was someone people looked up to! Now he'll never work as a pro hero again. *You had no right to take that away from him!* I won't forgive you. *I'll kill you*!"}

"Anyone else finds it surreal that the rule-abiding Iida was the one to attempt murder?" Mic asks.

"His rigid personality may be the very reason *why* it happened." Hound Dog sighs.

{"Shouldn't you be worried about saving that guy?" Stain pointed

and Iida followed his finger to see pro-hero Native slumped against the wall of the alley. Iida's stomach sank. He hadn't even realized Native was there!}

"I am ashamed of my actions back then." Iida says solemnly.

{"So busy with your grudge, you forgot all about him, right? You planned on using your quirk only for your own selfish desire for revenge. You're about as far from being a hero as I can imagine." Stain slid his katana from Iida's shoulder and licked it, "And that's why you'll die tonight."

Iida couldn't move, he couldn't think. What would his parents think? What would Tensei think? They'd be so disappointed and he wouldn't even be able to apologize. Hot tears fell on the concrete, how could he have been so stupid?}

"Anger makes you do stupid things." Todoroki comforts.

{"Goodbye, child. May your death bring about a better world."

Iida closed his eyes and waited for the sharp bite of the katana, but it didn't come.}

"Are we gonna watch a hero kid bleed out?" Mount lady says in horror.

"Because watching our friends and even ourselves die wasn't bad enough." Kamui growls.

{"Hello again, *hero killer*. Fancy seeing you here."}

"Yes distract stain so Iida can get away!" Uraraka cheers.

{"Mastermind." Stain pointed his Katana at the newcomer. Iida tried to look, but could just barely see dark red boots standing behind Stain, "So nice of you to come. My blade hungers for the blood of the bastard that killed All Might."

"Did you know that the girl who taught me how to fight loves you?" Mastermind asked idly, "When I told her I was killing you tonight, she was so excited. Told me to bring her a vial of your blood." Mastermind fixed Stain with a green-eyed stare, "I don't intend to break my promise."}

"Okay I've Known you for months don't know why I'm surprised." Dabi

chuckles.

"Do you two just not care that I hate the whole reason you joined?" Shigaraki asks.

"I just want to kill Endeavor." Dabi says bluntly.

"The only one who actually cares about Stains goals is Spinner and he's not here." Toga giggled.

{Iida didn't think that was how love worked at all, but he figured that whoever taught Mastermind to fight must be as crazy as he was, so it was best not to question it. He tried to move his fingers but couldn't. Was this how Tensei had felt when he woke up and couldn't move his legs?}

Many people wince at that.

{Mastermind launched himself at Stain, a long knife in each hand. Stain sliced down with his katana, intending to lodge it in his opponent's shoulder, but Mastermind twisted out of the way at the last second, slashing Stain across the ribs.

Stain hissed as the blade snuck between the metal plating on his suit and left a long gash, "You have excellent aim, Mastermind." He smiled. "Unfortunately I have been at this much longer than you have." He ran forward again with his katana. This time, when Mastermind dodged, he kneed him in the stomach and then used a knife he had hidden in his other hand to slash at Mastermind's arm. He brought the blade to his mouth, only to look at the clean metal with confusion.

"A word of advice," Mastermind laughed, "when planning to fight a blood quirk user, invest in excellent armor."}

"Snap." Dabi grins.

{Before Iida could blink, Mastermind was pushing Stain back and he had to bite back a groan as Stain stepped on him before launching forward again. The two had seemingly forgotten about him in their haste to kill each other and Iida didn't think it would be wise to remind them he was still there, frozen on the ground.}

"Smart move." Shinsou elbowed Iida lightly.

{This time Mastermind blocked the katana with his knives and

twisted, disarming Stain and sending the sword skittering further down the alley. Stain didn't even look toward his fallen blade, instead pulling a pair of hunting knives from his belt and running forward again.}

"So many knives." Todoroki shook his head with a sigh.

{Iida flinched as another knife came sailing toward him and flew over his head. He *flinched!* Iida tried to stamp down on his growing hope as he thought about moving his fingers and they obeyed him. *He could move again!* He looked to where Stain and Mastermind were fighting further down the alley and for one brief moment, he considered taking advantage of Stain's distraction and working with Mastermind to bring him down. He shook his head and slowly stood up. No. It had been a stupid decision to come after Stain in the first place and if the hero killer had taken him down so quickly, what would he do if both Stain and Mastermind decided to kill him. Both had taken down heroes far more experienced than he was, he wouldn't stand a chance. He couldn't, *he wouldn't*, do that to his family. Not again.}

"Thank goodness." Momo sighs.

{Iida sneaked from the alley as quietly as he could before revving up his engines. He had to find Manual.}

"That could have been worse." Izuku mumbles.

"Don't jinx it there're four other stories to see this go so many different ways." Shinsou warns.

"Don't remind me." Iida groans.

{"Is that all you got?" Izuku taunted as he stabbed Stain again, "I can see why I've killed so many more heroes than you."}

"It's so hard to hear him brag." Mic winced.

"It's just not him, and yet it is." Midnight groaned.

{"You're the worst kind of person on this earth," Stain growled, "you let other people do your dirty work and then you take all the credit. You take joy in senseless death and violence with no regard for your effect on society!"}

"Hypocrite." Sero grumbles.

{“Oh I understand my effect on society, all right.” Izuku said as he blocked another throwing knife, “I understand that they fear me, that they think I’m powerful. That the kid they all thought was weak is stronger than all the rest of them!”}

"You tell him!" "**Show some respect.**"

{“So it’s revenge you’re after, is it?” Stain panted as he pulled another knife from its sheaf, “You’re just as bad as that kid I’ll kill later.”}

"He would have hunted me down, good to know." Iida said suddenly pale.

{“Revenge? No, I’m afraid it’s simpler than that.” Izuku replied. “Society is what made me who I am. They tossed me aside and ignored my pain. They agreed that I was only good for being abused and hated, so guess what? It’s my turn to be powerful.”}

"I get it but it still sucks." Sato sighs.

{Stain rushed at him with both knives, trying to draw blood from the exposed skin on his face, but Izuku simply bent over and stabbed both his knives into Stain’s gut before backing away.}

"He hit an artery." Aizawa informed.

{“I’ll kill you for what you did to All Might!” Stain choked out.

Izuku straightened. The hero killer had lost a lot of blood. He was getting slower and more disoriented the longer the fight wore on. The Hero killer was much better at quick battles that allowed him to draw blood early on. He could feel the conviction in Stain’s aura, but he barely paid it any mind, he’d felt more murderous intent from Katsuki on a *good* day. Izuku slowly sauntered forward and when Stain raised his knife to stab him, he simply knocked his blade out of the way.

“Thanks for the fight, Stain.” He said. “It’s been a nice challenge.”}

"He won..." Izuku breaths out *"Alone."*

{“Manual!”

Manual looked up from the fire he was putting out when he heard his intern's voice, "Iida! Where have you been?" He took in the blood staining the white armor, the missing helmet, the tear streaks, and the way his intern was limping, "What happened to you?"}

"Kudos for not swearing in that situation." Hawks huffs.

{"The-the hero killer." Iida choked out and Manual felt sick. "I-I know where he is. He's fighting Mastermind in an alley a few blocks away. I-I couldn't fight him, he was going to kill me. Native's still there. H-he's paralyzed with Stain's quirk."}

"All things considered not a bad run down." Mirko concedes.

{"Come on Iida," Manual said, "Let's get you to an ambulance."

"No!" Iida cried, "You have to catch the hero killer. You have to save Native!"

"Did you say the Hero Killer?" Manual and Iida flinched as Endeavor came up behind them. Iida nodded, "I know where he is."

"Lead the way, boy." Endeavor said, and Iida started running, with Endeavor and Manual close behind. Shouto Todoroki watched them leave from his place among the sidekicks. Iida looked like he was lucky to have survived. He shook his head and focused on sending ice toward some of the fires. Maybe he should have told someone his suspicions about Iida after all.

But, he thought, *at least the hate in his eyes is gone.*}

"Small victories." Koda nods.

{"Right down here!" Iida called, then stopped short when he saw the blood. Some of it was his, he knew, but there was a lot more of it than had been on the ground when he left.

Endeavor went to Stain, who was lying on the ground, his red scarf blending into its surroundings.}

"Graphic." Ashido shivers.

{"Surrender, Villain! You cannot escape!" When Stain didn't move, he bent down, keeping one hand on fire just in case. He

checked the villain’s pulse and swore, extinguishing the light in his hand.}

"He looks so disappointed." Todoroki smiles softly.

{Meanwhile, Manual had gone to help Native. Iida went over to help him, but Manual just shook his head, “I’m sorry, Iida. It looks like he bled out sometime during the fight.”

Iida stared at the fallen hero in horror as Manual put his arm around him and led him out of the alley.

“Come on,” he said softly, “let’s get you to the hospital.”}

"At least almost getting arrested saved someone's life." Izuku comforts.

"Yes, there is that." Iida nods taking deep breaths.

"Okay let's just watch the next chapter, maybe good things will happen." Uraraka suggests.

"Yeah we gotta see what Viridian's up to." Mei agrees.

"It's starting." Shinsou warns.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Discord:
https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:TGG Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Izuku looks into online schools.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Research

{Izuku had spent the entire day so far researching online schools while Mom was at work. She'd tried to stay home, but she'd had to leave early yesterday because Izuku was too useless to stay out of trouble, so Izuku wasn't about to make her miss work *again, just so he wouldn't be alone. Thankfully, she'd listened when he pointed out that he wouldn't be doing anything besides sitting on the couch all day, which he didn't need two arms for anyway, and she'd left after she made him promise to keep the door locked. He was just happy that he wasn't holding her back.}*

"I get his point but leaving someone alone when they're sick or injured is awful." Uraraka pouts.

{In any case, if he was able to transfer to online school, he'd have to get used to being home alone during the day, since Mom obviously couldn't afford to quit her job. There weren't that many online schools, and those that did exist were mostly some sort of mixed format where students still had to show up once a week. That would probably be better than going back to Aldera, since he would only have to deal with bullies occasionally, rather than every day, but something told him Mom wouldn't see it that way.}

"Neither do we." Midnight agrees.

{The whole point of him going to an online school was so that he wouldn't have to deal with having classmates, so if he still had to attend classes, even infrequently, Mom would worry about how he was being treated. Izuku hated it when Mom had to worry about him. She didn't deserve to have a garbage son like him, she deserved a son she could be proud of, a son with a quirk.}

"Auntie doesn't care about any of that." Bakugo growls.

{But that wasn't going to happen, so it was Izuku's responsibility to make sure she worried as little as possible. That meant that he couldn't just put up with weekly bullying, since Mom might not believe him if he lied and said his classmates were being nice. That left him to find a school that was entirely online. There were only two schools that did not require in-person attendance. One of them seemed almost like a traditional school, where students showed up in video-chat classrooms at set times and turned in homework every day just like Izuku was used to at Aldera. There were two problems with that school, however. The first was that it seemed to include group projects, which might lead to Izuku being left out at best and cyberbullied at worst. The second was that it only accepted new students at the beginning of the semester, which meant that Izuku would have to stay at Aldera for several months until he was able to transfer. He couldn't do that to Mom.}

"Perhaps I should design a fully online school myself." Nedzu starts writing out plans in his notebook.

{That left Izuku with his final, and only, option. It apparently had options for everything from grade school until the end of high school and was entirely remote. According to their website, Izuku would just read articles and watch lectures associated with each lesson, then take tests and do assignments to test his learning. He would be able to work at his own pace, so he wouldn't have to worry about how stupid he was, he could just go slower than average. He did have to complete each semester class within six months, but that sounded like something he could handle. And Mom wouldn't have to worry about him having classmates that would bully him!}

"Aside from the fact that *you are smart*, that's perfect!" Kaminari cheers.

{There was only one problem. He would have to pass an entrance

exam.

He could take it at any time, so he wouldn't have to worry about going back to Aldera while he waited for the new semester to start, but...was Izuku really smart enough to pass? Kacchan didn't even get straight A's and he was so much smarter than Izuku! What if he took the test and didn't pass? Would he have to go back to Aldera? Mom would be so disappointed! He really was the worst son, wasn't he?}

"No!"
"You're great!"
"It'll be fine!"

{He ignored the voice in his head that said that Eraserhead thought he was smart. Eraser had just been being polite when he saw Izuku's notebook, there was no way he actually thought Izuku was intelligent. But Eraser wasn't worried about being polite, so he could be telling the truth…

Izuku shook his head. That was too confusing. It was just easier to firmly remind himself that he was an idiot, just like Kacchan and his teachers always said, and leave it at that. That way he wouldn't get his hopes up. When he inevitably failed the entrance exam, it would still hurt and Mom would still be worried, but at least he would already be expecting it. It was for the best.}

"Who would have thought the Golden Boy could be such a defeatist?" Dabi asked.

"Well we've only seen him on the battlefield so it's not like we know him." Toga chirps.

{Katsuki felt sick. The entire school was talking about how Deku got suspended. Boulders had been bragging about it all day, as had the other two extras that had been involved, so everyone already knew how Deku had been beaten up so badly that the principal had to call Auntie Inko to come to pick him up. Glow had said it was his idea to pin the whole thing on Deku like he was proud of his creative thinking, and the principal had fallen for it hook, line, and sinker.}

"The fuck the quirkist bastard did." Bakugo growls.

"That school was really on that toxic bullshit." Kirishima huffs.

"It still is." Sero sighs.

"Not for long~" Kaminari and Ashido chorus glancing at their principal.

{But Deku couldn't have started that fight. Katsuki knew that Auntie Inko knew that, and the principal sure as hell knew that. So why had the school gone along with Glow's story? Deku was a quirkless weakling who couldn't even defend himself, so why would he start a fight with his classmates? Sure, those extras didn't have awesome quirks like Katsuki's, but their weak-ass quirks were better than nothing, and Deku had those stalker notebooks, and he obviously knew he couldn't win, and even he wasn't stupid enough to pick a fight, so what did the school get from blaming Deku?}

"Their *reputation*." Miruko spits out.

{Well, those three extras who had beaten him up had gotten off scot-free. But it shouldn't matter to the school who got the punishment, right? They should be punishing those who were actually at fault so that they knew they did something wrong. That's what heroes did, at least. They put the bad guys in prison so they wouldn't do anything bad in the future, even after they got out. Wasn't that the way things worked?}

"That's how it's *supposed* to work." Aizawa nods.

{If the principal was letting these guys get away with what they did, then who else had he let get away with stuff? Were there villains out there who were out beating people up because the school hadn't done anything to stop them back when they went here? That was kinda messed up. It was a good thing that Katsuki knew better than to…

Katsuki froze.}

"You can practically *see* the lightbulb switch on." Kaminari grins.

{How much had *he* gotten away with? He had already had to come to terms with the fact that he hadn't been acting like a hero, but he hadn't been acting like a *villain*... right? The teachers all knew he wanted to be a hero! They all told him he'd be a good one! They wouldn't just do nothing if he'd been acting like a villain, not when they all knew he was going to be the next number one!}

"He's figuring it out." Ojirou sighs with a bit of relief.

{But he'd hurt Deku, and it was villains who hurt people. Not heroes. Not civilians. Villains. Villains hurt people. He hurt people. He was a villain.}

"He really should have joined us." Shigaraki grumbles.

{Katsuki couldn't keep himself from exploding his pencil, but the only reprimand he got was a stern look from the teacher for interrupting class. Katsuki couldn't help but wonder what would have happened to Deku if he'd done something like that, obviously not exploding his pencil, because he didn't have a quirk to do that, but if he'd been loud? He'd probably have gotten detention at the very least.}

"Maybe if the teacher was having a good day." Izuku grumbles.

{Why had no one ever given him detention? The school hadn't even done anything when he'd...when he'd told Deku to...Katsuki crushed the charred remains of the pencil. The teachers heard those extras telling Deku to kill himself every damn day, but they still didn't do anything. How long had Katsuki been a villain without realizing it?}

"Since that first time, you made him cry on purpose." Bakugo grit his teeth.

{He couldn't trust his teachers, not anymore. How was he supposed to be the best if they wouldn't even tell him what he was doing wrong? He had to be better! He had to change and actually act like a hero if he was ever going to be the best! And he was going to be the best. He was going to be the best hero, no matter what stupid challenges got in his way, no matter how much he had to change, no matter if those stupid teachers couldn't be bothered to do their fucking jobs, Katsuki was going to be the best!

But how?}

"Check your local community center, they got all sorts of weird shit." Mei claims.

"Aldera doesn't do community stuff so I didn't even know we had a center until after I got into UA." Izuku informs.

"Are you sure Aldera is an accredited institution?" Iida asks.

"Hell if I know how." Izuku groans.

{Jun Hamasaki woke up chained to a table. Immediately, he started pulling at the chains and even tried cutting them with his claws, but without any trigger in his system, there was no way he'd be getting out. What happened? He'd been at the police station, then there had been alarms and that detective had left alongside the hero who arrested him, then another officer had come in and opened a tiny bottle with a single mechanical...}

"We get to see what happens to crab-guy." Toga grins.

{He groaned. He knew the symbol of evil, whoever he was, was powerful enough to have some dirty cops on his side. He should have known that they wouldn't leave him in police custody, he knew too much. It probably didn't even matter that he'd said anything, they still would have dragged him back here anyway.}

"He's right." Shigaraki says simply.

{Speaking of, where exactly was *here?* It would have been easier to just kill him, inject him with poison rather than a sedative, but instead they'd kept him alive. Well, as long as this wasn't the place they did their experiments, he'd be fine.}

"Congratulations, you jinxed yourself." Dabi chuckles.

{The door creaked open and Jun craned his neck to try and get a better look at either the room or his visitor, but unfortunately, aside from a bright lamp over his head, the rest of the room was dark. There was some shuffling in the general direction of the door, then he heard a high-pitched squeaking that set his teeth on edge, almost like someone had forgotten to oil the wheels on one of those old metal wagons.

The comparison wasn't too far off, apparently, because his visitor finally stepped into the light pushing an old metal cart loaded with a variety of tools and bottles that Jun didn't want to know the uses of. His blood ran cold as he realized the man was wearing large round glasses and a lab coat. *The doctor.*}

Izuku gaped at the screen "It can't be."

{The doctor took a voice recorder from his pocket and pressed a button, “Phase three, experiment two. Hypothesis: through a combination of mutation and trigger, an elevated quirk level can be achieved even after the drug is out of the system.”

“P-please, d-don’t do this.” Jun didn’t care that pulling at the chains hadn’t worked before. He couldn’t be turned into...it didn’t matter if none of the others remembered the actual experimentation, he didn’t want to...this couldn’t be happening!

The doctor didn’t seem to care about his pleas, though, since he picked up a thick syringe off the cart and moved to stand over the table, the light reflecting off his thick round glasses so Jun couldn’t see his eyes, “Time of first injection: 8:24 pm.”}

"Human experimentation!?"
"Fun."
"Viridian needs to stay out of it."
"But he won't."
"Do you think crab-guy will survive?"
"The only way to know is to watch."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Shinso meets half of the chaos duo!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Abduction

{Izuku leaned back in his seat after finishing up the list of theories he'd been working on. He'd spent the morning reviewing the videos he had of the hero students and making rough lists of potential ideas for improvement that he could clean up once he'd seen their quirks in action more, but for now, there wasn't much else he could do on that project, which meant that it was time for Extra-Credit-Kun.

Oh god, Mei really *was* starting to rub off on him, wasn't she?}

"You know it!" Mei cackles.

{Izuku shook his head with a chuckle as he grabbed the notebook he'd dedicated to their extra credit project and opened Shinso's file, only to realize that he was at a dead end there as well. At least with the hero students, he had some combat videos to analyze, but all Izuku had for Shinso was his student file and the video of his entrance exam, which obviously didn't show the full potential of his quirk because he couldn't use it on robots. If Izuku wanted his analysis to be of any use to Shinso at all, he needed more information.

The easiest way to get that information would be to simply ask and hope that Shinso wouldn't be too creeped out to answer him. Well, even if he was creeped out, he'd probably still answer if

Izuku explained that it was to help him do better in the sports festival. Anyway, it didn't really even matter because he was probably in class right now...but it wouldn't hurt to check, right?}

"If you catch his free period you could drag him out of class." Uraraka suggests.

"Yes, because I'm not enough of a social pariah, the weird support kid taking me out of class will be *fine*." Shinsou says, voice dripping with sarcasm.

"Gee thanks." Izuku snarks.

"Anytime." Hitoshi grins.

{Before he could second guess himself, Izuku opened up the class schedule for class 1-C. Even if Shinso was in class, which he should be, it would still be helpful to know his schedule so he and Mei could track him down later.}

"Thank god those stalker-vibes are on our side." Shinsou smirks. Izuku retaliates by throwing popcorn in the boy's hair, much to Iida's dismay.

{Speaking of Mei, she chose that moment to burst through the door to Izuku's workroom without knocking. She didn't even wait for him to look up before she draped herself over his shoulders, groaning dramatically, "Izu-Kun, help! I can't make Shinso's babies!"}

Dabi coughed "I forgot she talked like that for a second there."

"I think it's funny." Toga giggles.

"I never said it wasn't." Dabi chuckles back.

{Izuku snorted, "Most girls have to actually meet a guy before creating his children."}

"Naughty boy~" Midnight grins.

{Mei grabbed his shoulder and spun his chair around so he was facing her and could see the manic grin that had just spread across her face, "That's a brilliant idea!"

Izuku smiled and shook his head fondly, "Let me guess, you need more info on his quirk and fighting style before you can really get

started?”}

"Well, duh!" Mei dismisses.

{“Yep!” Mei picked an empty spot on Izuku’s desk and sat down, “You too?”

Izuku nodded and turned back to his screen, “I was just looking up his schedule to see when the best time to meet him would be.”

“Well, make it ASAP!” Mei said impatiently. “I want to start making babies!”}

"Mei." Maijima whines.

{“You can’t just rush these things, Mei-chan, it isn’t polite.” Izuku told her patiently. “We can’t just take him out of class...or maybe we can.”}

"Free period." Uraraka teases.

{Mei jumped off the desk and leaned over her shoulder, “Wait, what is it?!”

“He has a study period right now.” Izuku pointed to the screen. “If we got Powerloader’s permission, we could probably pull him out of class for a few minutes, since he wouldn’t actually be missing any lessons.”}

"At least he's being considerate." Maijima groans.

{“Let’s do it!” Mei hugged him tightly before pulling him to his feet and pushing him toward the door. “What are you waiting for?! I have babies to make!”

Their classmates glanced up at Mei’s declaration as the door opened, but they spared the two less than a second before shaking their heads and going back to work on their own projects. Izuku still thought it was a little weird how quickly the class had seemed to just accept their antics, but he wasn’t going to look a gift horse in the mouth. He had Mei and that was enough for him right now. He’d probably just manage to work himself into an anxiety attack if he tried to second-guess every interaction he’d had with his classmates looking for ways that they actually hated him, and honestly, he was too busy with his analysis projects to have any time for that right now. }

"The Problem Child is going to struggle with overworking himself his whole career." Aizawa sighs.

"Then it's good he has such dedicated friends to lean on." Mic comforts.

{It didn't take them long at all to reach Powerloader's desk, especially not with Mei still pushing him in her excitement. Powerloader simply sighed and looked at them as they approached, "Should I be concerned about what you two are cooking up?"

"No!" Izuku said at the same time that Mei shouted, "Yes!"}

"Mei!" Izuku cries in exasperation.

"I know I'm a disaster you're still learning!" Mei defends.

{Unfortunately, Mei's voice was just a little louder.

"We just want to ask Shinso some questions about his quirk." Izuku said quickly. "I looked and he has a study period right now, so we were hoping we could borrow him and bring him here. We'd use my workroom so we wouldn't bother the other students. Please?"}

"He's so polite." Toga coos.

{Izuku had learned his puppy dog eyes from his mom, and honestly, he wasn't even aware that he was doing them until he caught Mei mimicking his expression out of the corner of his eye. Powerloader simply looked at them tiredly for a long moment before caving, "Midoriya, you go and get him. I'm not sure I trust Mei not to blow something up between here and there."

"Come on, it's not like there are that many explosive things between here and the general education department!" Mei exclaimed. "Just the wiring...and probably the fire extinguishers if you count foam as an explosion...Oh! And the security system! Izu-Kun, do you know if there are any bombs in the security system?"}

"Case and point, kero." Tsu smiled.

{"Yeah, it's probably for the best if I just go…" Izuku said, ignoring the way Mei pouted at him as he turned back to

Powerloader. “Could I have a note explaining the situation in case Shinso’s teacher asks why I need him?”}

"I know." Mic grinned.

{“Present Mic should already be expecting you.” Powerloader said tiredly. “I mentioned your little project to the other teachers and warned him that it was only a matter of time before you dropped by.”

“Oh.” Izuku didn’t know if it was good or bad that the entire faculty knew about their plans to help Shinso. Honestly, he’d never had teachers care about what he wanted to do before, so this was all new territory. “That’s good then.”

Powerloader nodded, “Get back quick before Hatsume blows up our lab again.”

Mei cackled and ran back toward her desk, “Good luck!”}

"Ask for the impossible." Shinsou teased.

{Hitoshi tapped his pencil idly on his notebook as he reviewed English verb structure for the third time. Not that having a second language wouldn't be useful, but he couldn’t help thinking that the hero students were probably training right now and getting more and more of an unfair advantage every minute that Hitoshi spent studying academics. There was only so long until the sports festival and his last chance to get into the hero course, so he didn’t want to waste any time.}

"Just wait." Jiro smirked.

{The silence of the classroom was interrupted by a quiet knocking on the door and a tiny-looking kid with tangled green curls and large eyes poked his head in, “Present Mic, sir? Would it be alright if I borrowed Shinso for a few minutes?”

Hitoshi froze as his entire class swiveled in their seats to look at him curiously as if he had any idea why a kid he’d never seen before in his life was interrupting his class and asking for him by name.}

"He's so confused." Hagakure giggles.

{His classmates' curiosity was almost palpable as Mic-sensei looked up from his desk and gave the boy a mischievous smile, “You’re one of Powerloader’s gremlins, right?"}

"It's bad enough you call them that, but right to his face?" Maijima questioned. Mic just shrugged.

{The kid sputtered for a moment at Mic’s wording before apparently giving up on being embarrassed and letting out a sigh as he walked fully into the room, “Yes, sir. He said that he mentioned things to you…”

“Of course!” Mic grinned. “Shinso, go ahead and grab your things. There’s no guarantee you’ll be back by the end of class.” As Hitoshi hurried to comply, Mic turned back to the kid. “Try to return him in one piece, ya dig?”}

"Ominous." Shinsou joked.

{Hitoshi’s eyes widened and he felt himself pale slightly as the kid returned Mic’s smile with a small one of his own, “No guarantees. I’m not the one you need to worry about, but also I’m not responsible for anything Mei-chan does when she’s excited.”

“Oooh!” Mic laughed. “I can see why Nedzu likes you so much!”

The class erupted into whispers and Hitoshi was starting to wonder if he would have a better chance of surviving if he just jumped out the window. Mic-sensei wouldn’t *actually* let this mystery kid, or whoever this Mei-chan person was, hurt him...right?}

"Oh Shinsou, you look mildly terrified." Uraraka teases.

"Wouldn't you?" Shinsou raises an eyebrow. Uraraka just snickers.

{Hitoshi finished packing his backpack and gulped as the kid smiled at him. Normally, a bright smile like that would put him more at ease, but after hearing the kid basically plot his murder, it just looked vaguely terrifying. Reluctantly, Hitoshi followed his...kidnapper? Was that what the kid was? What was even happening?}

Dabi snickers "That kid has no idea what to do."

{His kidnapper didn’t say anything as he led Hitoshi down the

hallway to a part of the school he didn't recognize, not that *that* was helpful at all, considering that he'd been at UA for less than a week. He had no idea what was happening anymore and honestly, he was too afraid to ask. All he knew was that this kid might kill him and his teacher wouldn't even care. So much for the teachers at UA being different.}

"Hey!" Mic frowns.

{His kidnapper still didn't break the silence and as they got even more lost in the maze that was UA, Shinso eventually got fed up and decided that if he was going to get murdered anyway, it wouldn't hurt to at least ask this kid why he'd kidnapped him. At worst, he'd just get killed a little sooner, right?}

"Shinsou, no." Izuku chuckles.

"Shinsou, yes." The boy smirks.

{"Um…" Hitoshi's voice sounded too loud and he had to take a step back as the kid pinned him with those wide eyes, giving Hitoshi a strange sense that this kid knew everything about him and was simply dissecting him with his gaze, "I have a few questions."

The kid smiled brightly again, "Of course! I might not be able to give the best answers, but I'll try!"}

"He is too smart to have this much doubt." Jiro sighs.

{"Ok…" Hitoshi took a breath, "Who are you? Where are we going? Why did you just kidnap me? Finally, who is Mei-chan, and should I be writing my will?"}

Snort
"Hahahaha!"
"Oh my god!"
"This kid!"
"Fair reaction."

{The kid looked at him in shock for a long moment before he started giggling uncontrollably, "Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry! I didn't...and I completely forgot to introduce myself, so no wonder you're...and Present Mic called me a gremlin, which probably didn't help anything. This is probably why our classmates are terrified of us, huh?"}

"You think?" Shinsou deadpans.

{“Probably.” Shinso said, not because he knew this kid’s classmates, but more because he didn’t really have any other response to that. “So…?”

“Oh! Right!” The kid jumped slightly and started walking into the labyrinth that was UA again. “My name is Izuku Midoriya and we’re heading back to my classroom. Mei-chan is my best friend. She probably won’t hurt you, she just gets really excited about her inventions and they don’t always work the first time, which isn’t that bad, you just need to be a little careful in case they explode unexpectedly. We’re support students...obviously since Mei-chan has inventions to explode. Um...what else…?”}

"Still didn't tell him the 'why?'." Dabi snarks.

{Oddly enough, Midoriya’s rambling was actually calming and made him seem less like some mysterious psychopath, so Hitoshi actually found himself feeling a little more at ease as he cocked an eyebrow, “Why you kidnapped me?”

Midoriya furrowed his forehead as his voice dropped to a mutter, “I didn’t...why would I...well, I guess I *did* kind of steal you away unexpectedly, but that wasn’t…”

“Midoriya.” Hitoshi interrupted the kid’s mutter storm and gestured for him to continue. “Why did you kidnap me?”

“Oh, um…” Midoriya chuckled awkwardly and rubbed the back of his neck, “I don’t want to get into too much detail without Mei-chan here, but basically, we’re going to get you into the hero course!”

...what?}

As the screen fades out the crowd whines at not seeing Shinsou meet Hatsume and the start of his training. The grumbling only ends when the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Knowledge is power

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Information

{Hitoshi crossed yet another company off their list as Izuku dialed the net number, “I think it’s time we start looking into some plan Bs.”

“Yeah.” Izuku sighed as the phone rang on speaker. “I was hoping this would work out, but it’s looking like it’s not going to.”

The phone stopped ringing and Izuku scrambled as a voice answered on the other end, “Hello, you’ve reached the Help Us Company, HUC for short. How can I help you today?”}

"Not a bad idea." Midnight says slightly impressed.

"I think they have age requirements though." Mic considers.

Aizawa shrugs "Maybe they don't or are different in that world."

{“Um, yes, hello!” Izuku said brightly. “Your company provides civilians for hero training exercises right?”

“Yes, that would be correct.” The receptionist replied. “That’s actually the entire point of our company!”

“And do you ever provide other services?” Shinso asked. “Like villains for things like that?”

"Not normally." the receptionist hummed. "The hero commission normally prefers to have heroes fill those roles when possible. May I know why you're asking? You seem a little young to be hiring our services."}

"Not hiring." Shinsou sighs.

"Hoping to get hired." Izuku corrects.

{"Um, yeah, a little." Izuku grimace. "We're looking more along the lines of employment opportunities?"

"We're going to be trying for hero schools this next year." Shinso clarified. "So we were hoping to volunteer as villains and get some actual combat experience."

"That *would* give you an edge." The receptionist said. "But unfortunately, as I said, we don't really provide that service, and even if we *did* we have an age limit of at least 16 for our employees. I...actually, there's a possibility...let me...is it alright if I put you on hold real quick?"}

"They have an idea!" Hagakure bounces in her seat.

{"Yeah, sure?" Izuku frowned and turned to Shinso as jazzy hold music filled the room, "Well, that's...promising?"

Shinso shrugged, "More than the other places that just politely laughed in our faces."}

"Dicks." Jiro mumbles.

"What was that?" Mineta chimed in.

"Nothing perv." Jiro scowled.

{Izuku nodded in agreement and was about to say something else when the hold music suddenly cut out, "Alright, are you still there?"

"Yeah. we are." Shinso said. "What do you have for us?"

"Well, it's not a guarantee, but our company has been contracted to be the civilians for an upcoming training exercise and I *believe* they are looking for villains as well." The receptionist said. "However, they might also have an age requirement just like we do."}

"They'll take what they can get." Ojirou sighs.

{“That’s…” Izuku hurried and reached for the notebook that Shinso was practically shoving into his hands. “That’s better than nothing. Uh, do you know where we can find out more?”

“I can give you a link.” The receptionist giggled, “I’m glad to see you two are taking the initiative, that will be really helpful when you’re heroes.”

Izuku’s jaw dropped and he looked at Shinso, who he could tell was having the exact same thought process. When. *When they were heroes.* Not if. They were going to be heroes.

After a moment too long, he shook his head, “Yes! Yes, please. Thank you so much!”}

"It takes so little support to surprise them." Joke whines.

"Their brains will break when they make it." Brave chuckles setting Joke back to her laughter.

{“This is your own damn fault, All Might.” Recovery Girl complained. “Seriously, what were you thinking? Cornering a young lady like that?! Honestly, I almost wish she’d done more than just blind you, because maybe then you would actually learn your lesson!”}

"Preach!"
"Tell him!"
"Sing it!"

{Kyoka sat awkwardly on the examination bed in the UA nurse’s office, twisting her earphones between her fingers as Yagi, no, *All Might*, stood at the eye wash station getting chewed out by the oldest hero Kyoka had ever seen. Yep. This was an adventure, alright.

“I still feel bad.” Kyoka fretted. “I shouldn’t have…”

“Oh no, dearie, it isn’t your fault that Yagi killed all his brain cells years ago.” Recovery Girl assured her. “You have absolutely nothing to be sorry for. All Might here was acting like a creep, and you responded accordingly. As far as I’m concerned, you were more of a hero in this situation than he was, do I make

myself clear?"}

"Yes, ma'am!"

{Kyoka blinked in shock for a moment, then found herself smiling, "Yes ma'am. It's not my fault that All Might is an idiot."

All Might sputtered as Recovery Girl laughed proudly, "Oh, I like this one! You chose yourself a good successor, All Might. I'm almost tempted to say you might actually have some sense."}

Izuku pouts.

{Kyoka frowned. What did she mean by "successor"? And earlier, right after she'd sprayed him, All Might had said she was *strong enough for his quirk*, whatever that meant. At the time, Kyoka had been a little too preoccupied with not accidentally killing the number one hero to worry too much about it, but even after things had calmed down a little bit, Kyoka was used to overhearing things that she wasn't supposed to. Overhearing people's secrets was the worst part of having a hearing quirk, but it was something she'd had to get used to so Jiro had just filed All Might's weird comment away as one of those mysteries she would never have an answer to.}

"That reminds me, nice keeping One for All from me Midoriya." Jiro smiles at him.

"It wasn't easy," Izuku chuckles "I couldn't really test your range without drawing suspicion."

"I bet." She snickered.

{Usually, however, those mysteries had nothing to do with *her*, and keeping a secret about her *from her* was decidedly less ok, "What are you talking about? I'm not All Might's *successor*. He just offered some training sessions to help me get ahead before UA. Or, at least, that's all he *told* me."

Recovery Girl shook her head and hit All Might's knees with her cane, "You didn't tell her?! Of all the hair-brained, idiotic..."}

"He was interrupted by his own idiocy." Shigaraki chuckles.

{"I was getting around to it!" All Might insisted. "If you hadn't noticed, our original meeting was interrupted!"

Jiro put her foot down, “What are you two talking about? If you’re just going to argue and not actually tell me, then I’m leaving. I’m not going to waste my time sticking around with people who aren’t even willing, to be honest with me.”

Recovery Girl glared at All Might, who looked as contrite as he could with his eyes still somewhat swollen from the pepper spray, “We are referring to my quirk, young Jiro. It is called One for All and I would like you to inherit it.”}

"Well that was blunt." Izuku deadpans.

"Can you blame him?" Shinsou snarks.

"He made it this grand thing when he offered it to you, didn't he?"

"It's All Might, I'm sure it was dramatic, kero" Tsu agrees. At Izuku's nod they smile at him.

{Hitoshi stared at the screen, his jaw on the floor as he recognized the logo, “I think the HUC receptionist forgot to mention that this was an exercise for *UA!!!”*}

"Oh my," Nedzu begins "depending on how this exercise is executed I may have to add it to our own school."

{“No, this is even better.” Midoriya nodded like he was trying to reassure himself. “This way, we can show our skills and abilities even before the entrance exam and make a more memorable first impression. We just...we just need to be such good villains that they realize they need us on *their* side. This...this’ll work. This’ll work.”

Hitoshi raised one eyebrow skeptically, “You’re basically planning on scaring UA into thinking we’ll become villains if we don’t become heroes?”

“Well...” Midoriya smiled sheepishly. “We *are* trying to incite fear…”}

"They are menaces in the making and I am living for it." Dabi laughs.

{“Is there an age limit?” Hitoshi leaned over to read some of the text. “There’s no point in getting our hopes up and planning on this thing if they won’t even let us participate.”

Midoriya quickly scrolled through the page, muttering unintelligibly to himself for a minute as he read the rules, “No. Actually, there’s a section for minors. We’ll need to have our parents sign a waiver, just in case we get injured or something, so that’ll be a challenge, but it’s reasonable and they just say *minor* not a specific age, so we can definitely apply.”}

"So..." Shinsou begins "Other me's quirkist fosters and your helicopter mom." He glanced at Izuku to see a look of stress on his face "Fun."

{Hitoshi smiled, “Ok, that sounds good, what do we need to do to apply?”

“We need to send in basically a fake police file,” Midoriya said. “All the information the police would have on us if we were real villains.”

Hitoshi’s face fell, “Like our quirks.”}

Izuku grins "Not necessarily." Causing his friends to ask after his theories to which he replied "No spoilers."

{Midoriya got a calculating look on his face, “Not necessarily. Say we train enough that I can hack into the cameras and erase footage of us, and you can make people forget you ever brainwashed them, then we can argue that the police would reasonably remain ignorant of our quirks and...well, and even our faces and identities, if we’re careful enough. We can give them just enough information to give *us* the advantage, all while studying the sports festival to make sure we know what quirks and personalities we’re up against.”}

"How curious." Nedzu smiles in approval.

{“Do you really think they’ll allow that?” Hitoshi asked skeptically.

Midoriya shrugged, “No, but I’m not sure they’ll allow us to be heroes either, and we’re doing it anyway.”

“Touché.” Hitoshi rolled his eyes. “We’re gonna be heroes.”

Midoriya nodded, “Villains first, but yeah. We’re gonna be heroes.”}

"I can't wait."

"This'll be fun."
"I hope it works."

Headcase smiles at the excited children as they cheer and bicker. She calls the room to order as the next chapter begins.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP... Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Izuku leads his classmates in a strategy exercise.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Strategy, Strategy, Strategy

{The students looked up at the list Aizawa had projected with the students' names, ranks, and scores in shock. Izuku had narrowly beaten Mineta, even though he'd been able to use his quirk in at least the repeated side-step. Mineta burst into tears, only stopping when Ojirou hit him over the head with his tail and reminded him about the strategy exercise.}

"Darn, it'd be nice to get rid of the grape." Uraraka gripes.

"I take it the rumors are true then?" Shinsou asks.

"Yes." Mei growls.

{"Alright Deku, do you have a good understanding of your classmate's quirks?" Aizawa asked. When Izuku nodded he turned to the rest of the class, "I will go inside for five minutes and when I return, you will try to take me down." He turned and walked away. "Good luck."

All eyes turned to look at Izuku, who smiled, "Ok, so here's what I have in mind…"

"Why should we listen to you, Deku?" Bakugo stepped forward, explosions popping from his hands, "You're just some quirkless nobody."

Izuku took a deep breath, “I may not have an awesome quirk like you do, Kacchan, but,” he screwed his eyes shut, “that doesn’t mean I’m useless!”}

The groups cheer for the boy standing his ground.

{There was a long moment of silence before Bakugo huffed, “Whatever nerd.” He turned away from the group, “There’s no way I’m taking orders from you. If any of you other extras know what’s up, you’ll refuse to follow this useless freak, but whatever. I’m out of here.”

Kacchan went over and sat underneath one of the trees at the far end of the yard. Izuku's eyes lit up. Sitting where he was, Kacchan would be the first thing Aizawa would see when he came out, which meant that he, whether he knew it or not, could serve as a distraction to make the rest of the plan work.}

Dabi grins "Yeah, use the stubborn fuck."

{Iida tossed a flare toward where Kaachan was sitting, then turned to the rest of the group, “That was uncalled for. Deku has quite the professional reputation and he is far from useless. Although,” he turned to Izuku, “the fact that you are quirkless puts your performance during the entrance exam into an entirely different light. I must apologize again for my rudeness that day.”}

"I couldn't really say before, but you are the *first* person since I was diagnosed quirkless to apologize to me for... well *anything* really." Izuku tells Iida, smile softening "Thank you for that."

Iida doesn't know how to respond so he settles for "Of course."

{“It’s not a big deal!” Izuku waved his hands placatingly, then rubbed the back of his neck. “You didn’t know I was quirkless and I try not to tell people if I can help it!”}

"With good reason." Jiro growls.

{“Still,” Iida pushed his glasses up his nose, “it was very impressive.”

“Dude,” Kaminari interrupted, “are you really a recommendation student, even though you’re quirkless?”}

"Dude." Kaminari deadpans toward his other self.

{Izuku nodded, “I had the good luck to get to know a few pro heroes in the last year. They recommended me because of my skills in analysis and strategy.”

“Do you know why there are three of us in this class?” Todoroki’s expression was hard to read, but Izuku figured he was confused since his position as a recommendation student wasn’t exactly normal.

“Politics,” he gave a small, nervous smile, “Nedzu figured there’d be a mutiny among the parents if a quirkless kid took one of the four normal recommendation spots, so he petitioned the school board to add an extra one this year. They officially approved it after seeing my performance in the exam.”}

"Can I just say 'fuck society' and be done with it?" Shinsou snarks.

{“Not that this isn’t interesting,” Jiro said brusquely, “but Aizawa-sensei is going to be coming back any minute.”

“Oh, right!” Izuku said, “Jiro, you can hear really well, right?” She nodded. “Ok, go near the door and listen. Warn us when he’s coming back.” Jiro nodded and headed off. “Koda, you communicate with animals, correct?” Koda nodded nervously, “Ok, could you get some birds to see where Aizawa-sensei is now? Go stand on the other side of the door as Jiro so that Aizawa can’t see you both at the same time. That way, even if he cancels one of your quirks, the other will still have theirs and will be able to warn us when he comes.”}

"Starting off strong." Aizawa comments.

{“What about the rest of us, dude?” Kirishima asked and a few people took an involuntary step back at the wide grin that spread across Izuku’s face.

“Here’s the plan…”}

"This is gonna be good." Kaminari says rubbing his hands together in excitement.

{As soon as the five minutes were up, Shouta headed back outside. It would be interesting to see what the problem child would come up with and would be even more interesting to see if his other students were willing to put aside their biases and listen

to him. This was as much a test of his other students to see if they could cooperate as it was a chance for Deku to prove himself, not that Shouta would ever tell them that.}

"A discrimination test? Sounds like you." Mic remarks.

{He walked out the doors with his quirk already activated, just in case they were planning a blitz attack, but there was no one there, just Bakugo sitting moodily under a tree. Shouta narrowed his eyes. Where were they?

All of a sudden a few objects were thrown at his face from the tree line and exploded when they were just a foot from his face. Flash grenades! Yaoyorozu must have made them. He closed his eyes as soon as he saw the light, then opened them as soon as he thought it was safe, only for them to start watering tearfully. Did the problem child seriously just use tear gas on him?}

"HA!"
"Brutal!"
"Ooh, that looks like it hurts."

{As Shouta squinted around, he could slightly see Tokoyami's dark shadow spread out by the main building and could tell he was hiding other students, but couldn't tell who. All of a sudden, a patch of thin air pushed him over. Nice try Hagakure, but he's a trained pro-hero. It's going to take a lot more than that to take him down. He tried to regain his footing like he always did when someone tried to throw him off balance, only to find the ground beneath his feet slick with acid. He sighed an inconvenience, but not something he'd never faced.}

"Fall, fall, fall!"

{All of a sudden, his muscles tensed as an electric shock coursed through him. Crap, the acid was conductive. Where was Kaminari hiding? This would be so much easier if he just knew where to look to cancel out their quirks, but the students were all being careful to hide from him.}

"Go Kaminari!"

{A shower of small pebbles started pelting him from the tree line. He looked over in that direction and some of the pebbles slowed down and dropped to the ground as their gravity returned. As if that was a cue, Ojirou, Kirishima, Sato, and Shoji all rushed out

from behind trees, equipped with sunglasses and gas masks, and started attacking him, trying to surround him so that he couldn't cancel all their quirks at once.}

"Their timing needs work, but this attack is well executed." Nedzu comments.

{Shouta smiled and readied his capture weapon to take them down, only to find it wouldn't move like it was supposed to. He looked down at it to find that Mineta had thrown his sticky balls all over it while Shouta was distracted by Uraraka's pebbles. He activated his quirk, which was getting painful since the tear gas hadn't dissipated yet, and the balls fell off. He turned back toward the close combat team as they reached him, only to be blinded again by Aoyama's navel laser. Fine, even if he couldn't effectively use his quirk, he still had enough battle experience to combat his students based on their movements alone.}

"Sensei really said 'fuck it, I'll fight blind.'" Shinsou chuckles.

"We haven't given him much of a choice." Todoroki mentions.

{The close combat team kept up a steady stream of attacks which combined with the laser and tear gas to disorient Shouta just enough that he didn't realize Sero's tape was reaching out toward his ankles until it was already wrapped around him. He was yanked off his feet and he saw Iida running with the other end of the tape as he slid down an ice path, apparently made so that he wouldn't get hurt by being dragged at super speeds across the rough grounds.}

"At least you won't get road rash." Midnight teases.

"He still got tear gassed." All Might reminds.

"It's cute that you seem to think this is a first for him." She chuckles.

{Shouta slid to a stop at Deku's feet, who smiled down at him proudly as he stuck a foot on his chest, "Hey there, Eraser! Give up?"

He sighed heavily and nodded, his body going limp in surrender, "Good work, problem child, very impressive." He glared at Deku, "But did you have to use tear gas?"

Deku rubbed the back of his neck nervously, "You're always

saying to not be afraid to exploit any weakness in an opponent.”}

"He did this to himself really." Dabi chuckles.

{His other students were all yelling and high-fiving each other as they gathered around their downed teacher.

“That was awesome!” Ashido yelled.

“Yeah, super manly!”

Shouta extricated himself from the tape and stood, putting eye drops in, “Yeah, yeah. Good work, brats. Don’t let this go to your head, though. You’ll never have a twenty-on-one fight in your hero careers.” He stood up straighter, “And now for the expulsions.”

The group went silent, with the exception of Mineta who started crying again as he stared up at Shouta with fear.}

"Way to kill a mood Eraser." Joke whined.

"I try." Aizawa deadpans, completely serious.

{Shouta gave a deranged smile, “It was a logical ruse!”

Several students started crying along with Mineta, who had switched to tears of relief as Deku practically fell over from laughter.}

"You're secretly a little shit aren't you?" Shinsou asks Izuku.

Izuku, with the most innocent look on his face, responds "Secretly?"

{Yaoyorozu shrugged, “I thought that was obvious from the beginning.”

A bell rang in the school, signaling lunchtime and his students practically ran toward the building.

“Deku!” Shouta called out. Deku paused and looked up at him with wide, worried eyes, but Shouta just smiled softly. “You did good, problem child.”

Deku gave a smile so bright that it should be illegal, “Thanks Eraser!”}

"Where did you get sunglasses?" Izuku stares at Shinsou who just smirks and ignores him.

{“Whatever,” He raised one eyebrow, “you’d better get going unless you want to miss lunch.”

“Oh, right!” Izuku started to run to catch up with his classmates and waved over his shoulder, “See you later, Eraser!”

Shouta chuckled and shook his head, heading toward his office to get his super extra strength eye drops and rest his eyes for the next lesson.}

"You know, that's fair, sensei deserves a nap after that." Sato claims.

"D'accord." Aoyama comments.

{Izuku walked through the too-full cafeteria balancing his tray and trying to find an empty table, as had been his habit since he’d been diagnosed quirkless. Trying to sit with other people was just asking for trouble.}

"This puts certain things in perspective." Uraraka comments.

{Which was part of the reason he was so confused when Uraraka enthusiastically waved at him and motioned for him to come to sit by her and Iida. He looked behind him, expecting to see Ashido or maybe Jiro behind him, but the only other person she could have been waving at was some kid with purple hair that Izuku didn’t know. Judging by the slightly raised eyebrow the purple-haired kid was giving him, he didn’t know Uraraka either. Which meant she was waving at Izuku. Oh no.}

"Cameo!" Mei cheers.

{Izuku slowly went to go sit next to her, wondering if this was some kind of trick. It had to be, right? He was quirkless and Kacchan had made sure everyone knew it, so why would anyone be nice to him?}

Izuku found himself in a crushing hug courtesy of one gravity-defying friend.

{“Deku!” Uraraka said cheerfully. “That was super cool how you came up with a plan to beat Aizawa-sensei! You’re super smart!”

Izuku chuckled nervously, waiting for her to mock him, but she never did. Instead, she turned to her food as if nothing else needed to be said. Izuku just looked at her in shock. What was happening?}

"A healthy friendship buddy." Sero comforts.

{“Yes. It was very impressive, although we did have to use some underhanded tricks to win.” Iida frowned. “However, it does appear that was the only way to win.”

Izuku nodded, “Yeah, Eraser’s hard to counter because he can cancel your quirks, so you kinda have to be willing to fight dirty if you’re going to beat him. It’s the same with some villains.” He shrugged, “I’m planning on being an underground hero, so fighting dirty is just kinda part of the package.”}

"It sounds so simple, but doesn't feel right." Iida remarks.

{“Still,” Iida said, “I wish we didn’t have to resort to such tricks.”

“Oh, lighten up Iida! We won, didn’t we? And no one got expelled!” Uraraka hit him softly on the shoulder and Iida looked like he didn’t know whether this was normal or if he was supposed to scold her for it.}

Uraraka giggled "Do you know now?"

"Yes, I believe I do." Iida huffs a laugh.

{“Yo! Deku!” Kirishima clapped him on the back as he, Ashido, Sero, and Kaminari passed by on their way to another table, “That was super manly how you beat Aizawa-sensei! We’re looking forward to getting to know you better this year!”

Izuku blushed and looked at him with wide eyes, “O-ok? Um, I really didn’t do much, I mean, I left most of the fighting to you guys.”

“Don’t be so modest, dude.” Kaminari laughed, “Compared to a bunch of hopeless idiots like us, you’re a regular genius!”}

"He shouldn't talk like that." Izuku murmurs.

{“You’re not…”

Sero cut Izuku off by laying a hand on his shoulder, “It’s ok. We

have other strengths, but intelligence just isn't one of them and there's no use in denying that."

"Oh!" Ashido smiled, "Let's go sit next to Bakugo! He's trying to be all surly over by himself!"

Izuku genuinely hoped Kacchan didn't explode them immediately. They were too nice to die young.}

"Holy shit!" Kaminari laughed.

"He really thought that didn't he?" Ashido asks.

"By the fact that he's blushing I'd say yes." Sero points out.

"Dude!" Kirishima chuckles.

Bakugo just sulks.

{Shortly after their group left, Yaoyorozu caught Izuku's eye from across the cafeteria and headed over with her tray, dragging a blank-faced Todoroki behind her.

"Hey, Midoriya!" She said as they sat down. "Or do you prefer to be called Deku? It seems to be what Aizawa-sensei and Bakugo both call you, and they seem to have known you the longest."

Izuku shrugged, "I don't really care at this point. Deku is the name I use for the analysis work I do for underground heroes, and it's going to be my hero name, so that's why Eraser calls me that. You can just call me whatever you want, I guess."}

"Same." Izuku shrugs as well.

{"I like Deku!" Uraraka said. "It has a 'you can do it' vibe to it!"

Izuku laughed, "You know, you're not the first person to tell me that."}

"To me you are." Izuku elbows her lightly; she smiles back at him.

{"You already know your hero name?" Iida said in surprise.

Izuku nodded, "As weird as it is to already have one, I already have a reputation, so it wouldn't make any sense to change it. I've even already been asked to give an autograph or two." He immediately slapped his hands over his mouth. Oh no! Why did

he say that? They were going to think he was bragging and then they'd hate him and…

The others were staring at him wide-eyed and then Uraraka started laughing, "You're gonna go underground and you're already famous? Sign me up!"

The others, with the exception of Todoroki, joined in on the laughter. Izuku turned bright red and tried to splutter out some sort of excuse, but the others just ignored him. The lunch hour continued like that with Izuku gradually getting more comfortable around these...friends? Was that what they were? Izuku didn't know, it still felt like he was waiting for the other shoe to drop.}

"You'll have to work on that Deku-chan." Toga giggles.

{They were going to walk together back to the classroom, but Izuku let the others go on ahead as he used the restroom. As he headed back, he spotted Aizawa off in a side hallway.

"Deku." Izuku was glad that Aizawa's eyes looked a little less red than they had. He still felt really bad for having Yaoyorozu make tear gas during the exercise. "How was lunch?"

"It was great!" Izuku grinned, "Everyone's really nice. It's so different from middle school."

Aizawa scowled but let it slide, which Izuku was grateful for. Instead, Aizawa just frowned at Izuku's tie, "Problem child, what did you even do to make a piece of fabric look like that?"}

"I don't have someone to teach me stuff like that!" Izuku threw his hands up.

{Izuku smiled sheepishly, "Well, my dad's not really around to teach me and Mom never learned so...let's just say that while you can learn anything on youtube, some things are more difficult than others. Don't worry though, I'll get the hang of it."}

"Hahahahaha!"
"No you won't!"
"You poor fool!"
Snort
Cough

"I hate you all." Izuku deadpans; no one believes him.

{Aizawa just huffed and grabbed Izuku's tie, untying it and retying it much neater while Izuku looked at him in shock, "Problem child." He shook his head as he tucked the end of the tie under Izuku's blazer and squeezed his shoulder. "Get to class. You wouldn't want to be late for your first official heroics lesson."}

"He's such a dad." Hagakure coos.

"Yeah, he is." Ojirou smiles softly.

{"Yes sir!" Izuku said and Aizawa tilted his head like he did when he was trying to hide a smile.

Izuku slipped into the room and went to his seat, unfortunately right behind Kacchan. He still wasn't quite sure how to feel about him. Kaachan had been his first friend, but ever since he'd made other friends, it had kinda tossed his whole perspective of their relationship on its head, especially since Aizawa and the others insisted that no one who treated him like Kacchan did could really be his friend. Kacchan glared at him as he passed, letting off a few intimidating pops of his quirk before huffing and turning to face forward as the bell rang.}

"Dick." Bakugo says evenly

{Izuku wondered who their heroics teacher would be. Probably one of the more combat-oriented teachers like Snipe or Ectoplasm. Oh, this year was going to be great! A loud bang sounded and everyone flinched as the door was slammed open. Izuku's eyes widened at the sight of their new heroics teacher, who was grinning at the class in all his muscled glory.

"I am here!"}

"Oh shit!"
"Last time they spoke he crushed his dream!"
"Oh look, the other shoe."
"Damnit, Damnit, Damnit!"

"Alright brats, the sooner you quiet the sooner we get back here!" Dabi shouts.

"You're certainly eager." Headcase comments.

"Mastermind is next, why wouldn't I be?" He snarks back.

Her smile widens giving him a look of knowledge that sets him on edge her voice is overly sweet as she answers "You'll see~" the sing-songy way she says it does nothing to comfort him.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Preparations for the training camp.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Preparations

{Shigaraki scowled as he looked at the new recruits. Yeah, Sensei said it was a good idea to use the hero killer's ideals to grow their numbers but he just didn't see *why*? Maybe if Stain's ideals brought in more six-foot-tall behemoths like Muscular, sure, but a schoolgirl and an emo? This was the league of villains, not the Disney channel!}

"Shit." Izuku whispers to himself.

{"Go away," He glared at them from behind the hand on his face, "I can already tell you're the kind of people I hate the most."

"Don't be hasty, Tomura Shigaraki," Kurogiri said, "I'm sure these two will add greatly to our cause."

"Hi! I'm Himiko Toga!" The schoolgirl said excitedly, "I *loved* Mr. Stainy! He looked so beat up when he died, it was so cute!" she did a little dance in place, "And you've worked with Mind-chan, right? He's cute too! I remember when he could barely hold a knife and asked me to teach him! It was adorable!"

"*You* taught Mastermind to fight?" The emo asked incredulously.}

"Hey!" Toga pouts.

"He has a point." Dabi teases.

{Giran laughed, “Yeah, I was surprised too, but this cute little lady is the main suspect in a string of exsanguination murders. Mastermind sure does have an eye for quality!”

Shigaraki glared at the emo, “At least she has the manners to introduce herself. What about you? What’s your name?”

The emo returned the glare, “Right now, I’m going by Dabi.”}

"I can't believe that bitch got me all worried about my first appearance for no reason." Dabi griped.

{“That’s no good. I meant your *real* name.”

“You’ll know it when you need to know it.” Dabi said coldly, “In any case, my new purpose is to carry out the hero killer’s will.”

“That wasn’t what I asked you, patchwork.” Shigaraki scratched his neck, “Why is everyone so hung up on Stain, anyway? He’s all I ever hear about! Every damn day! It’s really *pissing me off* !”}

"And yet they'll still work together." Jiro rolls her eyes.

{He lunged toward the two, who made to fight back, but Kurogiri warped their hands so their attacks went nowhere, “Calm yourself, Tomura Shigaraki. If you want to succeed, we must increase our numbers. Our chance is at hand,” He leaned close, “we must use the hero killer’s ideology to further our own ends.”

Shigaraki stalked away, “I’m leaving.” He slammed the door behind him.

Toga smiled, “I really thought he was gonna kill us for a sec!”

“I believe he knows what he has to do,” Kurogiri said calmly, “Shall we get back to you about recruitment at a later date?”}

"Well that wasn't much different." Dabi huffs.

{Shouto stood awkwardly by the fountain in the mall courtyard. Yaoyorozu had invited him to go with the rest of the class and he hadn’t been able to think of a good excuse in time. The rest of the class had split off into groups of two and three, leaving him alone. Yaomomo had invited him to come with her and Jiro to look at swimsuits, but he already had one, so he opted to stay behind. Maybe if he left quickly, no one would question it?}

"Visiting my mother was a much better plan." Todoroki confirms.

{“Hey! Aren’t you one of those students from UA?”}

"Hey look Todoroki's getting my mall encounter." Izuku groans.

{Shouto saw a teenager in a ratty black hoodie, but he couldn’t see his face.

“You were the second-place winner at the sports festival, right?” Shouto grimaced as the stranger put an arm around his shoulder, “You’re pretty powerful.”

“Please get away from me.”

“What can I say, I’m just a huge fan,” The man didn’t move his arm. “I can’t believe I’m running into you again. It makes me think it might not be a coincidence.” Shouto’s eyes widened slightly as the man put a hand around his throat, keeping his middle finger lifted, “It feels like destiny, but I guess from your perspective, we haven’t met since the attack on UA.”}

"Is this what you did to the green kid?" Dabi asked.

"So funny!" "**You're so cruel!**"

{The man smiled at him, allowing Shouto to see his face. Tomura Shigaraki, the head of the league of villains with a five-point disintegration quirk. Shouto swallowed, and suddenly the hand around his throat felt much more threatening.}

"Yep!" Izuku says with his voice pitched high.

{“Why don’t we sit down and chat for a while, Shouto Todoroki?”

Shigaraki led Shouto over to a nearby bench and they sat down with Shigaraki’s hand still at Shouto’s throat.

“I could just freeze you right here, you know.” Shouto said.

Shigaraki laughed, “If you tried, I’d just put my finger down and the first thing to go would be your throat.”}

"That is an unpleasant mental image." Iida remarks.

{“Here with all these people? A hero would come to catch you.”

Shigaraki shrugged, “Sure, but how many of these smiling sheep could I take out before that happened? I’m fast, I could probably take out twenty, thirty, maybe even more before a pro finally showed up. These idiots; assume that everyone has the same morals, but any one of them could use their quirk and start a massacre right now. They think laws and rules will protect them, they’re convinced nothing bad could ever happen to them.”}

"People should be able to live like that." All Might huffs.

{“What’s your point?”

Shigaraki shrugged, “That’s just it. I don’t know. I hate pretty much everything, but right now the Hero Killer pisses me off the most. Have you ever hated something so much you just wanted to kill it?”

My father,}

"I shouldn't be surprised." Endeavour sighs.

{ Shouto thought, but bit his tongue before he could say that, “Wasn’t the hero killer one of your men?”

“Not technically,” Shigaraki replied, “but that’s what the media made it seem like. And now everyone’s obsessed with him. Everything I’ve done, releasing Nomus on Hosu City, the attack on UA, even killing All Might! It’s all been overshadowed by that stupid hero killer and his stupid ideology. In the end, all he did was try to get rid of what he hated, same as me, so why is everyone so obsessed with him?”}

"He actually had a reason, as horrid as it was." Iida grumbles.

{“I don’t know…” Shouto said slowly, “Maybe it’s because he convinces everyone to hate what he does. His ideology makes sense, not all heroes deserve the title, and I think maybe everyone knows that deep down, they’re just too afraid to say it. Or maybe they don’t want to believe it. So they just let heroes keep taking power and abusing...abusing the system. Stain was a maniac, but he didn’t destroy things just because it sounded fun. He was trying to make a change, show how corrupt the hero system really is.” Shouto’s voice had dropped to a whisper, “That’s why I agree with him.”}

Shouto flinched at the admission "His methods are too extreme."

{Shigaraki looked at him strangely, “You have some strange opinions for a hero student.”

Shouto just stared at the ground helplessly. He hadn’t really meant to say all that, but maybe it was because Shigaraki was already a villain that Shouto thought maybe the guy would understand. Shigaraki wouldn’t judge him for hating heroes because he hated them too. Shouto wondered what had happened to make Shigaraki hate All Might so much. Could it have been something similar to why Shouto hated Endeavor?}

"It's nothing like that." Shigaraki scowls.

{“So you think people like the hero killer so much because he proved the corruption of hero society?” Shouto nodded carefully and Shigaraki smiled, “It all makes sense now! Why All Might pissed me off so much, why the hero killer made me so angry! It was right in front of me! All Might was the reason why these people smile and think they’re safe because heroes will always protect them. They trust them when really, heroes don’t save everyone, and they don’t deserve our trust.”}

"I'm sensing a theme." Jiro deadpans.

{Shigaraki released Shouto's throat and looked at him, “I don’t need to change my ways after all. I just need to prove how fragile society’s sense of safety really is! Thank you, Todoroki, you’ve been a big help.” He stood. “Don’t try to follow me, *hero*. If you try, I’ll get angry.”

Shouto watched him leave until he disappeared into the crowd.

“I’m not a hero.” He muttered.}

"I have this sudden sense of foreboding." Shinsou says tensely.

"Same." Izuku agrees.

"Definitely." Uraraka shivers.

{Toga hugged Izuku the moment he walked into the bar and gave him a kiss on the cheek, “Mind-chan! Mind-chan! How are you? It’s been so long!”

Izuku laughed and pried her hands away, “Himiko, you just saw

me a few weeks ago!”

“It *feels* like an eternity.” She pouted.}

"Bestie!" Toga cheers.

{“Welcome Mastermind,” Kurogiri said, “Can I get you a drink?”

“Sure, I’ll take cranberry juice, if you have any.” Kurogiri nodded and a laugh came from the corner.

“You have no qualms about murdering heroes and yet you’re worried about the legal drinking age?” Dabi scoffed, “Some villain.”}

Shigaraki scowls "Why would an intelligence build take on such a harsh de-buff?"

{Izuku raised an eyebrow, “It’s not so much that I’m concerned about the legal drinking age as it is that I make a living with my brain and I prefer not to have anything slowing it down.” He turned back to the bar, “You’re Dabi, right? Cremation quirk?”

“Yeah,” Dabi said and took a seat next to Izuku at the bar, “How’d you know?”

“I make it my business to know everyone in the underground, especially if I’m going to be working with them.” Izuku said simply, “I’ve had my eye on you for a while now.”}

"That's mildly terrifying." Dabi deadpans.

{Dabi looked vaguely concerned, but it was hard to tell many facial expressions with his scars. Kurogiri set a glass of cranberry juice down on the bar and Izuku pulled down his mask, letting it pool around his neck.

“Whoa, Mastermind,” Dabi said, “Aren’t you concerned about people seeing your face?”

Izuku smiled, “I’m concerned about *heroes* seeing my face. As odd as it sounds, my identity is not completely unknown in the underground. Giran and Himiko know who I am, for example, and quite a few people have seen my face.”}

"And yet no one would *dare* talk to us." Tsukauchi sighs.

{Dabi raised an eyebrow, “And you’re not concerned about anyone snitching to the cops?”

Izuku shook his head, “I was at first, but normally by the time people know my face, they’re already familiar with my reputation.” He took a sip of his juice, “I’ve got a bit of a temper. If anyone screws me over, I screw them over twice as hard. There was a gang a few months back, the Blue Dogs, have you heard of them?”

Dabi nodded, “They’re dead now, aren’t they.”

Izuku nodded gleefully, “They tried to threaten me into working with them rather than paying me. I gave them their plans, but then tracked down all the enemies the gang had and made sure they knew the weaknesses of every single member. They didn’t last a week.”}

"Effroyable." Aoyama shivers.

{Dabi shivered, “Remind me not to piss you off.”

Izuku smiled, “If I have to remind you, it’s already too late.”}

"I love this kid." Dabi grins.

{Shigaraki walked into the room, “Thanks for coming Mastermind. It’s always more fun when you’re my player two.”

“Not a problem, Shigaraki. You pay well and your jobs are always interesting. So what do you have in mind?”

Shigaraki sat at the bar, “We’re going to show how fragile society really is by attacking a UA training camp, kidnapping one of the students, and turning them to villainy.”}

"This old song and dance." Bakugo groans.

{“Hmm,” Izuku thought for a moment, “That might be difficult...do you have a plant in place?”

Shigaraki shook his head, “We have a spy, but not one I’m willing to pull out yet. He’ll be leaking the location to us as soon as they arrive.”}

"So there *is* a mole!" Mic shouts.

"Not necessarily." Nedzu states.

"Correct." Headcase agrees "Depending on the world there might not be one, or there could be multiple, and who they are, or why they are doing it can change drastically."

"And Clouds doesn't like repetition." Izuku points out.

Headcase smiles at him "And Clouds doesn't like repetition."

{Izuku nodded, “Alright then, who do you have in mind?”

Shigaraki smiled and pulled a photo from his pocket, “Katsuki Bakugo.”}

Collective sigh

{Izuku frowned and took the photo. It was of Katsuki chained up on the podium at the sports festival. He’d taken offense that Todoroki hadn’t used his fire in their fight so his win ‘didn’t mean anything’. Izuku got where he was coming from, but at the same time, Todoroki didn’t use his fire against anyone, so Katsuki really shouldn’t have taken it personally.

“Yeah, no, that’s a terrible idea.”}

Dabi laughs "Shot *down*!"

{Dabi laughed as Shigaraki stared at Izuku in shock, “But he already acts villainous.”

“I know!” Izuku laughed. “The problem is that he's too stubborn. You’ll never be able to get Katsuki to be a villain because *he doesn’t see himself as one*. He sees himself as a hero and no amount of threatening or bribery is going to convince him otherwise.” He let the group digest that information before continuing, “If you’re really serious about recruiting a hero student, I’d suggest going after Shouto Todoroki instead.”}

"And there it is." Shinsou sighs.

"I know we've said we'd follow you anywhere," Todoroki turns to Izuku "but this is not what we meant."

"I know." Izuku nods.

{Out of the corner of his eye, Izuku saw Dabi tense slightly and

smiled.}

The Dabi in the crowd tensed as well *"Oh, no."*

{“The number one hero’s son?” Shigaraki said in confusion, “What makes you think we’ll be able to turn *him*?”

“Take it from someone who used to want to be a hero,” Izuku smiled as the group reacted to that, “people don’t turn to villainy without a reason and Todoroki has one of the best reasons I’ve ever seen. He was abused by a hero for years and no one ever saved him. Who would ever believe the number one hero was guilty of child abuse?” Izuku lifted his glass to take a drink. “And besides, we have his brother to help us convince him.”}

The theater falls into a shocked silence, staring at the screen completely frozen. Dabi glares at Headcase as she smiles with a challenge on her face.

{The others looked confused as Dabi stared at him in shock, “How did you know?”

“A strong fire quirk, bright teal eyes, a hatred of all heroes, but *especially* Endeavor?” Izuku shrugged, “It wasn’t that hard to put together. I told you I’d had my eye on you for a while.” He looked Dabi in the eyes, “So what do you say *Touya Todoroki*, are you ready to see your brother?”}

"You're a fucking bitch!" Dabi growls at Headcase.

"I know."

"So what now? You gonna drag me to the front so everyone can question me?"

"No I'm not." she responds calmly.

"Why not!?" Todoroki interrupts. He's standing there gritting his teeth and clenching his fists; Dabi won't look at him.

"Because Clouds doesn't shy away from heavy topics." She waits for the room to settle just a little bit more. "I know it's harsh but we *must* continue." The people reluctantly sit and turn back to the screen as the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:TGG Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Izuku takes his entrance exam for online school.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

New Beginnings

{Izuku had spent the last week cramming non-stop for his entrance exam. He still wasn't entirely confident in his ability to pass, but he'd reached the point in his studying where he was starting to forget more than he learned, which probably meant that he should just take the exam, even if he'd inevitably fail. At least then he'd be able to move on and put his eggs in other baskets.}

"Oh joy watching a kid take a test." Dabi snarks still miffed.

{Mom was at work and had left that morning after giving him a kiss on the cheek and wishing him luck on his test. She had promised him Katsudon that evening as well, either as a congratulatory meal or as comfort food, it would depend on how Izuku thought he did. Izuku didn't really see the point of her going through all that trouble for him, but there was a selfish part of him that was just so happy that she cared. He wished that part didn't feel so good. It made the rest of him feel worse.}

"Poor Green Bean." Midnight whines.

{Just before noon, Izuku finally put his books to the side and went to the school's website, clicking on the tab that would take him to the entrance exam. He spent about half an hour filling out his basic information, like his name, what other schools he'd gone

to, his GPA for the last year, etc, cursing the fact that his cast made it so hard to type. He could still move his fingers, but his entire arm itched and started to ache if he used it too much, so at least for the next few days, he'd be stuck chicken-pecking at the keyboard. It was annoying.}

"Too True."
"Been there."
"Agreed."

{Finally, he reached the welcome screen and read through the instructions. The test itself was 200 questions, and he had three hours to complete it. Izuku glanced at the clock. It was 12:00, which meant that he had until 3:00 to finish the exam. That would mean he had just under a minute to answer each question, but that didn't count the time that he'd have to use to check over his answers at the end. Izuku took one last shaky breath before clicking the button that said: *Start Exam.*}

"You got this!"
"Ace that test!"
"Do it, do it, do it."

{The questions were deceptively easy. Izuku had assumed that he'd have to rush to complete each question in under a minute, but he was able to answer most questions almost instantly, which gave him more time on the more difficult questions, like the ones in the math section. If Izuku wasn't freaking out about the fact that his entire future depended on him doing well on this test, he'd almost say it was...fun? Was that weird? He could almost hear Kacchan telling him that he was a damn nerd.}

"You *are* a nerd." Bakugo grumbles.

"And there's nothing wrong with that." Kirishima elbows him earning himself a growl, which he ignores with a smile.

{Before he knew it, Izuku had answered every single question. He sighed in relief and looked at the clock, it was now 1:25, which meant he still had...wait a minute. Izuku felt a cold wave of anxiety wash over him. How long did he have again? Izuku knew it had a three in it, but did that mean he had three hours? Or was it one hour, and thirty minutes? How long was he supposed to spend? He couldn't have finished in under half the time, so it must have just been an hour and a half, which meant that he only

had…}

"No!"
"Damnit!"
"You have time!"

{Izuku looked over at the clock again and started freaking out. It was 1:28! He only had two minutes! He didn't have any time to look over his answers! But if he didn't look over his answers, he wouldn't have a chance to change any of his answers, which meant he had no chance of passing! Unless he really *did* have a full three hours, but if he didn't have a full three hours and tried to go back and check his answers, then he'd miss the deadline and fail by default! But if he didn't check his answers, then he wouldn't pass! How long did he have? Was it three hours or an hour and a half?!}

"Three!"
"You only used half the time!"
"Come on man!"

{Izuku glanced at the clock one last time. 1:29! It was better safe than sorry, right? Wasn't it better to get half the questions wrong than turn it in late? Izuku flailed as he scrambled to press submit, then frantically froze as he realized what he'd just done. What had he just done?! This was terrible! He hadn't even checked any of his answers!

His eyes stung as he tried to hold back his tears. It looked like Mom's katsudon was going to be a comfort meal, after all.}

"I'm sure he did great." Uraraka says firmly.

"I hope so." Izuku comments.

{Shouta curled up in the corner of the staff room at lunch and scrolled through the obituaries. He vaguely knew that he was just making things worse for himself, but he couldn't help checking every day, a sick sense of dread deep in his stomach as he desperately hoped that he wouldn't recognize any of the photos. Not that he'd ever seen Viridian without the mask, but he knew that the kid was young and had green hair. Plus, the fact that suicide would be listed as the cause of death would be a dead giveaway.}

"Oh Sho, you can't do that to yourself." Mic squeezes the man's shoulder.

"You wouldn't do much better." Aizawa grumbles back.

{When the kid hadn't shown his face for a few days, Shouta had hoped that he'd finally taken some time off to heal from some of his injuries. He'd thought that maybe the kid had actually grown a small sense of self-preservation, but that only went so far, and it had now been over a week since Shouta had seen Viridian. He'd even checked with Amplifier and Rock Lock, but neither of them had seen him, and Tsukauchi said that no one matching Viridian's description had been found dead from a villain fight. Even some of the other nocturnal heroes were starting to ask about the missing problem child, and they didn't even run into Viridian that often in the first place!}

"We *all* are worried for the kid." Rock Lock comments.

"Yeah, everybody will keep an eye out for him." Amplifier agrees.

{Shouta really hoped that Viridian's sudden disappearance didn't mean anything, that maybe the kid's parents had somehow found out about his nightly activities and that they had forced him to stop, or maybe that he had just gotten bored, but deep down, he knew that wasn't the case. The problem child had thrown himself headfirst into vigilantism to the point where he had become entrenched in the city's hero scene in only a few months, and the kid seemed to enjoy it, so Shouta couldn't imagine that he'd ever give that up, not unless...unless…}

"He's alright, or he will be." Dabi huffed, losing a bit of his tension.

{He shook his head and put away his phone. It wouldn't do any good to worry himself into exhaustion. The most he could do was keep an eye on the obituaries and hope to every deity he knew that Viridian hadn't decided that suicide by villain was taking too long. Maybe he was just reading too far into things and Viridian's mental health wasn't nearly as bad as it seemed and he was just out of town. But if he was just out of town, then why hadn't he given any warning before disappearing?}

"He got hurt, that's it, we promise." Hagakure whines.

{Shouta groaned and stretched as he emerged from his cocoon to get ready for his next class. Thankfully, his current class had

responded well to his logical ruse, and he hadn't had to permanently expel that many of them, so he still had quite a few students who were actually showing promise now that they were taking things seriously. He just needed to remind himself that he had more than enough brats to worry about without fretting about the problem child. Didn't make things any easier, but it was the most logical course of action.}

"Yes let's be logical." Midnight drawls with a roll of her eyes.

{"Hey, Shouta!" Mic's yell made him flinch and wish he'd actually gotten a nap. "You look like a mess, is something on your mind?"

"Doesn't he always look like a mess?" Snipe asked. "What's the difference?"}

"Ha!"
Giggle
Snort
"Savage!"
Gasps

{Shouta glared at him while Midnight struggled to hold back laughter.

"I can't explain it." Mic insisted. "But Shouta has his normal dishevelment and his anxious dishevelment, and today, it looks like he's worried about something. Is one of your students giving you trouble?"

"Not one of my official ones." Shouta muttered, but it didn't seem like anyone heard him. }

"So Viridian really has been claimed." Shinsou smirks.

{"Oh, are you gonna expel someone else?" Ectoplasm asked. "Dang, I'm gonna lose the bet."}

"Called it!" Ashido cheers.

{Shouta glared at them, "You shouldn't bet about how likely I am to expel my students."

"We're not betting on if you'll expel your students!" Mic yelled.

"No, we're betting on *when* you'll expel your students." Midnight

added helpfully.}

"That's even better!" Kaminari laughs.

{Shouta groaned, “If you must know, I’m worried about something on my patrol. There’s just a vigilante that’s been hanging around and I haven’t seen him for a while. I’m just hoping nothing’s happened to him, that's all.”}

"Leaving out a few details their Sho." Mic deadpans.

{Midnight grinned, “Aww! I knew you had a heart! What are you gonna do?”

“There’s not much I *can* do.” Shouta grumbled. “Damn, problem child.”

“Well,” Mic said, “when he shows his face again, ground him. That’ll teach him to mess with you!”}

"I hate you." Aizawa deadpans.

"Sure you do." Mic grins.

{Shouta rolled his eyes and ignored the sick sense of worry in his stomach that just wouldn’t go away. He wished that he’d noticed Viridian’s depression sooner. Maybe if he’d caught it before the kid had disappeared, he could have convinced the kid to get some therapy. Even if Viridian refused to go, Shouta still could have found some way to help so that the kid didn’t feel like he had to...Well, he just hoped it wasn’t too late.}

"You're not sensei." Momo says sadly.

{But one thing was sure, if by some miracle, Viridian was still alive, Shouta wouldn’t make the same mistake twice.}

His students cheer for his efforts and wish for his success.

{After changing out of his school clothes, Katsuki walked to the address he’d found on the internet. The building was plain, just a community center with a shitty playground off to one side and a couple of rooms for art classes and support groups, but he ignored them for right now and walked to the front desk. The lady behind it smiled at him as she waited for him to find the words. Stupid...why was this so hard?!}

"You're emotionally constipated?" Kaminari suggests with a cheeky grin, earning himself a glare.

{“Um, I was wondering,” Katsuki cringed, he was practically stuttering almost like Deku, “I was wondering if there was a hero named Amplifier here? I read on your website that…”}

"Is he gonna do what I think he is!?" Amplifier cheers.

"What do you want him to do?" Aizawa asks.

"Shut up and find out." She commands.

{The receptionist nodded, “Sure thing! Amplifier!” She called back into the offices behind her. “You got a visitor!”

“Awesome!” Amplifier was a lot... *bouncier* than Katsuki had been expecting. Considering the program that the website said she ran, he’d been expecting her to look a lot more intimidating. “What can I do for you kid?”}

"Oh, he is." Amplifier squeals.

{Katsuki’s mouth went dry and the only thing that kept him from running out the door was the fact that he wasn’t some shitty coward, “You’re the fucker that runs the rehabilitation group for villains on probation, right?”

Amplifier blinked a few times before she grinned, “That’s me! We meet once a week and focus on rehabilitation and personal development. It’s been really effective and we have a meeting starting in just a few minutes, but then you probably already know that, considering that you’re here. Do you have a note from your probation officer?”

“I’m not a fucking…” Katsuki forced himself to calm down, “I’m not on probation. Your website said you could use a couple extra hands, so,” he took a deep breath, “I wanna volunteer.”}

"CHARACTER DEVELOPEMENT!"
"Bakugo's going down the redemption route!"
"You got this!"
"Good luck!"
"We're so proud of you!"

Bakugo is slumped in his seat, face a little red, and grumbles "Can we

move on already?"

Headcase giggles at the boy before calling the room to order as the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Shinso meets the other half of the chaos duo.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Starting Line

{Hitoshi's mind was still reeling by the time they arrived at a large door that obviously led into a support lab. What did Midoriya mean when he said they were going to help him get into the hero course? *Could* they even do that? How…?

He was knocked out of his stupor, quite literally, when the door blew off its hinges and threw him and Midoriya against the far wall of the hallway. It didn't hurt as bad as he would have expected, and honestly, he was more dazed than hurt, but maybe that had something to do with the whole situation and not the fact that he'd just gotten thrown against a wall and was now sitting on the hallway floor.}

"Typical." Maijima sighs.

{"Mei-chan!" Midoriya yelled. "You could have hurt us!"

"Don't worry, Izu-Kun, that was just a disorienting blast!" A girl with bright pink hair and coveralls tied around her waist appeared in the doorway, nonchalantly moving a giant pair of goggles from her face to her head as if she hadn't just blown up half the hallway. "They'll cause damage to things, but not to people! Perfect for hostage situations!"

"Oh!" Midoriya scrambled to his feet and grabbed a notebook

from his pocket. “How does that affect people like Cementoss who are, objectively, made from things? There’s a kid in 1-A who can turn into rock and another in 1-B who can turn into steel, would they be affected? Would it only damage them when their quirks are activated? Or is the damage caused because the thing is non-living, in which case quirks wouldn’t affect it because the person with the quirk is still alive? What about…”}

"Do you think they'd join us for some experiments?" Mei asks.

"We could ask." Izuku turns toward the Bakusquad "Hey Kirishima, what do you think about weapons testing?"

"I'm in man!" Kirishima agrees enthusiastically.

"Not without adult supervision!" Maijima and Aizawa demand in unison.

Izuku and Eijiro easily agree while Mei pouts. Tetsutetsu chimes in to volunteer to join them.

{“What the…” A hero that Hitoshi assumed was Powerloader appeared in the doorway, his hands going to his helmet as he took in the scene. “How? Hatsume, I literally looked away for two seconds!”

“Well, technically, an explosion takes only a fraction of a second to begin.” Midoriya began. “But the actual chemical reaction can take several seconds to run its course, depending on the chemicals involved, but you wouldn’t be able to stop it once it reached the activation energy…”}

"Not helping Midoriya." Shinsou deadpans.

{“Didn’t you two promise to not bother the other students if I let you bring Shinso here?” Powerloader asked.

“Oh, it’s a support lab!” Hatsume dismissed. “Explosions are normal! We’re not bothering…”

“Shut the fuck up and go to your boyfriend’s room already!” A female voice called out loudly from inside the classroom. Midoriya turned bright red and sputtered, but Hatsume apparently didn’t care about whatever her classmate was implying, because she simply zeroed in on Hitoshi and leaned down until she was only inches away from his face. He

instinctively pressed himself as far against the wall as he could, which unfortunately wasn't very far.}

"Personal space Hatsume." Shinsou warns while she pouts.

{She smiled at him manically, "You must be Extra-Credit-Kun! Izu-kun's told me so much about you! We're gonna have so much fun!"

Hitoshi simply blinked at her as he waited for his brain to catch up and maybe, just maybe, make sense of her words, "E-extra-Credit-Kun?"}

"The nickname threw him off even more." Toga chuckled elbowing Dabi to get him to stop sulking.

{"Mei-chan!" Midoriya shoved her away from him and shook his head as he helped Hitoshi up. "You can't just call people by nicknames like that the first time you meet them! Shinso has a name!"

"Not important." Hatsume dismissed. "What's important is that I'm going to make his babies!"

Hitoshi choked on nothing and almost fell back onto the floor again as the crazy girl grabbed his hand and pulled him into the lab with Midoriya following close behind. He barely got a glimpse of the other students before he was yanked into a small dark room lined with computers and the door shut ominously behind him, trapping him with the two crazy students who had just kidnapped him. Was being a hero really worth all this?}

"Yes." Shinsou deadpans.

{Yes. Yes, it was.

Hitoshi took a deep breath and looked at his kidnappers with a well-practiced bored expression, "So...are you gonna explain what's going on now?"

Hatsume turned and slapped Midoriya's chest, "Izu-Kun! Why didn't you explain anything to Extra-Credit-Kun?!"

"I was waiting for you!" Midoriya defended. "I thought you wanted…"}

"Don't let me hold us back." Mei insisted.

{“Don’t waste time on my account, Izu-Kun, we have work to do!” Hatsume turned back to Hitoshi. “You, Extra-Credit-Kun, are our new project!”

Hitoshi didn’t think that explained anything except for the nickname he’d apparently acquired, but thankfully Midoriya was a little more willing to fill in the gaps.

“Powerloader has agreed to give us extra credit if we use our skills to help you.” Midoriya sighed as he turned on the lights and sat down in front of the line of computers. “I’m an analyst and Mei-chan is obviously an inventor, so we’re going to...well, be your support, I guess? I’ll help you analyze and train your quirk and she’ll make you a support item that you can use in the sports festival next month to give you the best possible chance of transferring into the hero course. Honestly, it’s ridiculous that they wouldn’t let you in the hero course in the first place, but at least now you can prove everyone wrong, right?”}

"You make it sound so simple." Shinsou sighs.

"That's because we haven't started yet." Izuku waves him off.

"What's that mean?"

"You'll see."

{Hitoshi thought about that for a long moment, “So you’re basically going to train me to be a hero so you can get extra credit?”

Midoriya smiled awkwardly, “Yes? I mean, only if that’s ok! We don’t have to if you don’t want us to, I mean, I get that we can kinda be a lot sometimes and…”

“Don’t give him a choice, Izu-Kun!” Hatsume exclaimed. “We’re helping you and that’s final! Ok, Extra-Credit-Kun?”}

"“Kidnappers” is a good term for them." Dabi murmurs.

{Hitoshi couldn’t help snorting, “Well, I’m not exactly in a position to say no, but are you sure you even want to help a kid with a villain’s quirk become even more dangerous? What if I go rogue like everyone’s always told me?”

His kidnappers obviously hadn't missed any of the bitterness in Hitoshi's voice, because they shared a glance and when Hatsume responded, she sounded angry, "Ok, that's it. You're gonna win this and we're gonna prove those assholes wrong! I am so sick of people being rude to my friends just because of downright stupid prejudices!"}

"We need names." Uraraka growls.

"How much time you got?" Shinsou grins.

"Shinsou no." Iida scolds.

"Shinsou yes!" Mei cheers.

{"F-friends?" Hitoshi's brain went blank. Hatsume couldn't possibly be including *him* in that, could she? They'd literally just met! But then, she'd already talked about having his babies...whatever the hell that meant.}

"He so lost." Jiro snorts.

{"It's best not to fight her friendship." Midoriya gave him a small, determined smile. "When Mei-chan gets something in her brain, it's best to just roll with it. So! Let's start with your quirk! It's brainwashing, right? Verbal response based?"

Hitoshi nodded, still reeling, "Yeah. But, uh, I can't control higher brain functions, just basically make the person into a puppet."

Midoriya had whipped out a notebook and was rapidly writing down everything Hitoshi was saying, "How do they snap out of it? Do you have to release your control?"

Hitoshi shrugged, "I can, like if they complete all the orders I gave them, but it's more common for someone else to jostle them, which can break my hold. That's how most of my classmates *rescued* anyone they thought I'd used my quirk on."}

"Taking notes." Twice assures "**Feel like shit for it!**"

{"Hmm," Midoriya ignored Hatsume's annoyed buzzing next to him, "Ask me a question."

"Why?" Hitoshi asked suspiciously

Midoriya grinned, "So you can brainwash me of course! I need to

know how it feels to be on the receiving end and it'll help me explore your limits…"

His eyes went blank as Hitoshi took control, glancing over at Hatsume, expecting her to be creeped out at the very least. To his surprise, however, she just looked excited and grabbed Midoriya's notebook from his lax grip, flipping through some of the pages until she'd found what she was looking for, "Ok! Test time! Izu-Kun already made a list of orders he wants you to give him, so let's start! Tell him to stand on one foot!"}

"Do we have to do these things when we get back?" Shinsou asks.

"Headcase told us that quirks vary in function and capabilities between worlds so it's better safe than sorry." Izuku informs.

{Hitoshi hesitated, glancing between Hatsume and Izuku. He'd learned the hard way not to give anyone any functional orders without their express permission. "I...um, I should ask him first."

"Well then, just ask him now!" Hatsume said impatiently. "It'll be another experiment to see if he tells the truth under your quirk!"

"It doesn't work like that." Hitoshi griped and turned to Midoriya. "Tell me whether or not you're ok with me giving you orders."

Just as he'd expected, Midoriya simply sat and stared at him blankly. Hitoshi turned back to Hatsume, who looked vaguely disappointed, "See? Verbal responses count as a higher brain function. I'm just gonna wake him up and ask."}

Izuku writes enthusiastically in a notebook a small frown appearing briefly at the failed experiment.

{Hitoshi released his hold and watched nervously as the light came back into Midoriya's eyes. Sure, he'd *said* that he wanted Hitoshi to brainwash him, but what if he got angry? It turned out that Hitoshi didn't have anything to be worried about, because the moment Midoriya was in control of himself again, he just shook his head and grinned brightly.}

"You're so strange." Shinsou shook his head.

"I know." Izuku shrugged sparing another glance at the still carefully blank Todoroki.

{“That was so cool!” Midoriya grabbed his notebook back from Hatsume and scribbled a few things down before handing the notebook to Hitoshi, “Ok, so this time I want you to tell me to do the things on this list, and if I haven’t woken up by the end of it, Mei, could you jostle me to wake me up? I want to compare that to Shinso releasing his control voluntarily.”

“Sure thing, Izu-Kun!” Hatsume grinned and grabbed her phone to start recording the session. “Ready!”

“Do you think you’ll wake up before the end?” Hitoshi couldn’t help asking. He had to ask a question to establish control anyway, so he may as well as one he was curious about.

“I don’t know.” Midoriya said. “It’ll depend on how your quirk deals with impossible orders.”}

"Excuse me?" Shinsou looks at the green boy with a raised eyebrow.

"Just watch." Izuku grins back at him.

{“Ok?” Hitoshi was pretty sure that they’d already figured that out since Midoriya had just done nothing rather than answer his question earlier, but apparently, he was no longer the expert on his own quirk.}

"That's normal for Midoriya, kero." Tsu smiles.

{He quickly took control of Midoriya and started going down the list. Most of the orders were easy things like stand up, sit down, stand on one foot, etc. The most interesting thing that happened was when Hitoshi ordered Midoriya to sit down on a stool. There wasn’t a stool in the little room they were in, so to Hitoshi’s surprise, Midoriya actually took the initiative to leave the room and go sit on the stool out by Powerloader’s desk. Hitoshi almost died of embarrassment as he ran after Midoriya, frantically apologizing to the other support students, but he finally decided that their classmates must be used to their antics because the only response they gave to their classmate coming out practically braindead was a few curious glances and a few giggles to Powerloader’s exasperation.}

"That could be dangerous." Maijima groans.

{“Shinso, I’m assuming you’re currently in control of Midoriya?” Powerloader asked with a sigh.

Hitoshi froze. This was it. This was how he got expelled from UA. He should have known better than to brainwash a UA student, even with their permission, and now he was going to get punished for his stupidity. He should have known this whole situation was too good to be true. He stared at the floor, clamping down on his anger and disappointment, “Yes sir. I’ll release him from my quirk right away.”}

"Hell no! Maijima-sensei isn't like that!" Mei shouts.

{“There’s no need for that.” Powerloader said. “I’m sure you’re in the middle of an experiment, right?”

Hitoshi hesitantly nodded. Was...was Powerloader just going to accept that?! He wasn’t going to expel him for using his quirk on a fellow student?! Apparently not, because Powerloader simply nodded as if this situation were completely normal...or as normal as any situation could be when Midoriya and Hatsume were involved.

“Shinso, please tell Midoriya to get back into his room.” Powerloader said. “And make sure he doesn’t run into anything dangerous on the way back, there are power tools in here.”

Hitoshi nodded frantically, grateful that he had somehow avoided getting expelled, and ordered Midoriya to go back to Hatsume, who was currently rolling on the floor of the little room dying of laughter. With his luck, he could just imagine Midoriya trying to walk all the way back home completely brainwashed if he told him to go to *his room.*}

"That would be hilarious." Kaminari chuckles.

{After that minor blip, everything went smoothly. Everything, that was, until Hitoshi read the last order on Midoriya’s list.

“Hatsume?” Hitoshi pointed to the page. “Does he really want me to order him to do this?”

“Don’t call me Hatsume, Extra-Credit-Kun, Mei-chan is fine!” Hatsume leaned over and read the order. “That one’s actually a pretty important experiment, so yeah, he definitely wants you to do it.”

“O-ok?” Hitoshi took a deep breath and looked at Midoriya, who was waiting in the middle of the room. “Do a backflip.”

Midoriya squatted and jumped backward, only to hit the ground as his attempt at a backflip completely failed.}

"Oooo."
"Ouch."
Hiss
"That's got to hurt."

{“Ow…” Midoriya groaned and rolled over, the impact more than enough to knock him from Hitoshi’s control, “Ok, so the person will still try to complete impossible commands, but won’t be able to if the task is outside their ability level. Nice to know.”

“I am so sorry.” Hitoshi ran to help him up. “I shouldn’t have given you that order, are you hurt? Do you need me to leave? I'm so sorry, I should stop asking questions, I’m probably making you really uncomfortable…”

Midoriya just laughed with a wince, “No! I put that on there on purpose! It was the only thing I could think of that, while theoretically possible, wasn’t a skill that I have. My first thought was that I would just wake up when given the order, or maybe my brain would subconsciously know how to complete the task...wait, do you know how to do a backflip?”

“Do I look like I know how to do a backflip?” Hitoshi deadpanned. “And why would that even matter?”}

Izuku grinned at the boy.

{“Because your quirk could be connecting your target’s body to *your* brain instead of theirs.” Midoriya explained as he took back his notebook. “Mei, make a note that we should ask Recovery Girl if she has access to some kind of brain scanner. We need to know whose brain lights up when tasks are being done, Shinso’s or his target’s.”

“Will do, Izu-kun!” Hatsume said happily. “I could probably build one myself if…”}

"NO!" Izuku, Shinsou, and Powerloader say together.

{Hitoshi couldn’t help but feel like he was intruding as both of them dissolved into muttering and wrote down their observations in their respective notebooks. He was starting to wonder if he should just go back to class when one of Midoriya’s more

coherent mutterings caught his attention, “...and we know you can modify memories, so…”

“No, I can’t.” Hitoshi interrupted before he could stop himself and he leaned back slightly when both of his kidnappers stopped their notetaking to stare at him.}

"You didn't know you could do that?" Izuku asked.

"I still don't know." Shinsou confirmed.

"But it's been mentioned in more than one story so it's more likely to be true, right?" Uraraka questions.

"Something to test." Shinsou shrugged.

{Midoriya frowned, “But in the footage, you could.”

“I don’t know what you think you saw, but,” Hitoshi shrugged helplessly, “I mean, I’ve never actually tried it, I would’ve gotten in way too much trouble for something like that, but I can’t even make someone answer a question, so I’m pretty sure I can’t make someone forget something or anything like that.”

“Hmm…” Midoriya tapped his cheek with his pencil a few times. “Mei, what color is Shinso’s hair?”

Hatsume grinned, “Purple!”

Midoriya nodded, “Ok, now turn and face the wall. Shinso, put her under your quirk so we can try something.”}

"My turn!" Mei cheers.

{Wait, were they actually going to try to modify Hatsume’s memories? It seemed like that shouldn’t be something she should be ok with, but when it came to these two, Shinso didn’t really know if any normal rules applied, “Umm, if she wants me to, I can, but she’d have to answer one of my questions.”

“Ohh!” Even from the back, Hatsume’s excitement was obvious. “Do I get to be the test subject this time?!”

“Are you actually crazy?” Hitoshi asked incredulously.

Hatsume simply laughed, “Probably!”}

Snort
"Hahahaha!"
"At least she knows!"
"No hesitation!"

{Hitoshi activated his quirk and shook his head in disbelief. These two had to be insane, “Ok, what now?”

Midoriya thought for a second, “Tell her to remember your hair being green.”

Hitoshi still didn’t think this was actually going to work, so he went ahead and gave the order, then released his control.

Midoriya smiled at him, then turned to Hatsume, “Ok, Mei-chan, before you turn around, what color is Shinso’s hair?”

“Is this a trick question?” Hatsume sounded confused. “It’s green, just like yours Izu-Kun! I thought you guys were going to mess with my memories or something?”}

Silent celebration spreads through the room as people bounce in their seats and rub their hands together.

{Hitoshi’s jaw dropped and Midoriya’s face split into a bright grin, “Turn around!”

Hatsume turned quickly and did a double take as soon as she saw Hitoshi, “Whoa! That’s so trippy!”

Hitoshi couldn’t even think. He...he hadn’t even known he could do that. Until he’d seen her reaction, he’d half-thought they were just being nice or something, but he’d actually changed her memories, “How...how did you know I could do that?”

Izuku smiled, “I watched your entrance exam. That other examinee you got in a fight with? I know him. He wouldn’t have let something like that slide unless he actually *had* forgotten about you like you ordered. All that was left was confirming the theory.”}

"You do petty well." Shinsou snarks.

"I try." Izuku giggles.

{Hatsume grinned and leaned close to his face, “I’m gonna have

so much fun making your babies!”}

"Phrasing!"

{Hitoshi walked into class 1-C at the end of the hour shell-shocked and with a smear of soot on his cheek that he hadn’t gotten around to wiping off after Hatsume’s welcome explosion. The moment that Present Mic saw him, the corners of his mouth started twitching and it was obvious that he was holding back giggles, “So...how was it?”

“I think I just made a deal with the devil.” Hitoshi said numbly. “Actually, two devils. Is that worse? It feels like that’s worse.”}

"Nah." Mei dismisses "It's *way* better!"

{This time, Mic-Sensei didn’t even bother to hold back his laughter, “Yeah, the support course is like that. Go ahead and take a seat.”

Hitoshi ignored his classmates’ whispers as he made his way to his seat and took out his things for the next lesson. Yes, Midoriya and Hatsume were...overwhelming, but in less than an hour, they’d discovered things about his quirk that Hitoshi hadn’t even realized after ten years of having it. If anyone at UA could get him into the hero course, it was his kidnappers.

So if those two really were demons, Hitoshi couldn’t quite bring himself to regret signing away his soul.}

"One of us! One of us! One of us! One of us! One of us!" Mei chants; Izuku and Uraraka join in, Iida sighs and Todoroki seems like he's starting to relax again. Tsu chuckles at Shinsou's look of sudden exhaustion. The next chapter plays with a tired crowd lazily gathering dinner.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Adults aren't perfect either.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Permission

{Hitoshi nervously straightened the paper again as he and Midoriya walked up to his foster home. It wasn't like the paper was that valuable. They'd just used the printer at the library to make a few copies of the permission waiver for the UA training exercise, so printing another wouldn't be a big deal or anything, but the paper felt valuable just because of what it represented. If they could both convince their parents, well, in Hitoshi's case, his *guardians*, to approve it, then they'd not only be able to practice all the strategies they were learning, but see how they matched up in a real fight against UA students. He wasn't sure how far they'd get, obviously, since the UA students would have way more training than the two of them, but Midoriya was right, it would be a good way to get their names out there and make themselves stand out from the tens of thousands of other kids who would be trying for the hero course next year.}

"And potentially traumatize your would-be senpai." Amajiki shivers.

{Assuming they could actually convince their guardians to sign off on it.

He held open the door for Midoriya and waited for him to take off his shoes before leading him back into the kitchen. His foster parents *should* be home now and even though they'd be tired from work, there probably wasn't any better time to have this

conversation. That didn't mean that Hitoshi wasn't tempted to turn around and run in the other direction rather than risk getting in trouble though.}

"I understand that." Todoroki mumbles.

{His foster dad was sitting at the table reading a newspaper as his foster mom made dinner, but neither of them saw the two of them come in. Hitoshi scuffed the floor with his heel, making just enough non-vocal noise to get his foster dad to look up from his paper. Hitoshi's stomach sunk as he did a double take between Hitoshi and Midoriya before his face hardened into a clearly displeased expression, "Hitoshi, you didn't tell us you'd be bringing a friend over."

"Oh, sorry!" Midoriya had an innocently guilty expression on his face. "I kinda insisted on coming over at the last minute and I was totally talking Shinso's ear off, so he didn't really have time to text you. Um, right, you're probably wondering...my name is Izuku Midoriya! You two must be Shinso's parents."}

"Taking the blame so Shinsou won't get in trouble is, sadly, a good idea." Shoji mentions.

{Foster Dad frowned, but looked a lot less angry than before, which made Hitoshi relax slightly. Having Midoriya take the blame for a *last minute visit* seemed like it had been a good plan, even though the truth was that they'd planned it, but his foster parents didn't really like him talking to them at all, even though he'd already tried telling them that his quirk didn't work over texting. Midoriya, however, was just energetic enough that they'd both decided he might be able to pass it off as an accident.}

"It's believable." Uraraka nods.

{"So you go to school with Hitoshi?" Foster Mom asked.

"No, we met after school one day!" Midoriya replied brightly. "The kids at my own school don't really like me…"

Hitoshi caught a gleam of satisfaction in Midoriya's eyes as his foster mom frowned in pity, "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that."}

"Sure." Jiro huffed.

{Midoriya shrugged, but didn't respond. To have the greatest

chance of success, they needed to fit themselves into the narrative that his foster parents already believed: namely, that Hitoshi was dangerous and that no one would willingly be friends with him. They would be more likely to believe Midoriya was hanging out with him because he lacked better options and it was safer than them thinking that Hitoshi was somehow manipulating, or worse *brainwashing*, him into being friends. Hence, the careful reluctance, which seemed to be working perfectly.}

"They shouldn't have to do this just to be friends." Mic growls.

"Hopefully their situation will improve sooner rather than later." Hound Dog agrees.

{“So, Midoriya.” Foster Dad closed his newspaper. “Are you here for dinner or…?”

“Oh!” Midoriya grabbed the paper from Hitoshi like he’d just barely remembered it. “Yes! I actually wanted to ask you guys something! I’m going to be going to this camp and I was wondering if Shinso could come along? It doesn’t cost anything, but we do need parental permission.”

“A camp?” Foster Dad hesitantly accepted the paper from Midoriya. “What kind of camp?”

“Well, uh...it’s kind of a training camp?” Midoriya grimaced. “You see, I kinda want to be a hero, but honestly I don’t really have a very good chance, so this is kinda to help me get a better idea of everything and see if it’s even *possible*, you know?”

Foster Dad hummed thoughtfully, but Hitoshi could tell he was still on the fence, “And you want *Hitoshi* to come with you? You know he doesn’t have a good shot at being a hero either, right?”

“I think Hitoshi can be a great hero!” Midoriya said firmly, eyes widening after a moment as he noticed his slip. “But, um, I mostly just want him there so I don’t have to be alone. It’s an entire week and we sleep there, so he wouldn’t be home for an entire week. I know that’s probably a deal breaker, but…”

“No, that’ll work.” Foster Dad said quickly, pen flourishing across the paper. “Just be careful, kid, ok?”}

"Anything to get rid of me." Shinsou sneers.

{Hitoshi fought back a smile as Izuku grinned triumphantly, “Don’t worry, I will be!”}

"Maybe." Mei teases.

"Hey!"

{Kyoka blew a strand of hair out of her face, only for it to fall right back in front of her eyes. She would have just used her hand to brush it back, but both her hands were kind of busy at the moment lugging around a *broken microwave*. She’d never really been the strongest girl out there, so after less than a week of All Might’s crazy *clean the beach* routine, her arms already felt like they were about to fall off. She was sure that the extra muscle would be useful and would really help her out in the hero course, but at the same time, this whole training program seemed just kinda illogical.}

"Just wait for the piggyback rides." Izuku laughed.

"What do you mean by that?" Jiro asks hesitantly.

"The whole carry the Number One Hero on your back through the sand training period." Izuku mentions off handedly unaware of the looks of shock spreading through his class.

{It wasn’t that she was complaining. Ok, well, maybe she kinda was, but anybody would be complaining if they were asked to clean an entire polluted beach by themselves! Like, she saw the appeal of building muscle, and All Might had insisted that without enough muscle mass his quirk would blow her arms off, but there were still some things that just weren’t adding up. First of all, she wasn’t even sure she *wanted* One for All. Sure, All Might and Recovery Girl had both said it was an amazing opportunity, and if she’d been allowed to tell her parents she had no doubt that her dad would be pushing her to jump in with two feet, but for now, all she’d committed to doing was *train* to receive the quirk.}

"*Allowed* to tell her parents?" Aizawa growls.

All Might shrinks in his seat wisely keeping his opinions to himself.

{So far, all that meant was a *lot* of muscle training, which, again, didn’t make a whole lot of sense. One for All focused on strength,

obviously. Anyone who had ever seen All Might fight could see that much, but at the same time, Kyoka just couldn't bring herself to believe that's all there was to it. Quirks just weren't that simple. Take her own quirk for example. Sure, it enhanced her hearing, but it also allowed her to project her heartbeat, not to mention the fact that it had a mutation element to it as well. It didn't fall into a neat little category because her quirk wasn't a one-trick pony and she was pretty sure that was true for most quirks. One for All shouldn't be any different.}

Izuku starts laughing loudly "Oh, It's *not*."

{She dumped the microwave in the truck they were using and stretched out her arms as she walked back to get another piece of garbage. All Might was a strong hero, but his go-to solution was usually to punch things, which meant that for him, the solution was always to have bigger muscles than his opponent and force his way to victory by sheer strength and force of will, but...well, as much as Kyoka hated criticizing All Might, that didn't always work. When she was singing, muscling through a difficult passage could do more harm than good. Instead of trying to get *stronger* in that case, the best thing to do was improve the technique and airflow so that she got a good quality sound without hurting herself. It was the same with her instruments. A guitar could be made of the strongest wood on earth, but if the player didn't know how to use it, it would still sound terrible. There had to be some technical elements to using One for All that she should be preparing for in addition to just building muscle.}

"She's figuring this out *way* faster then I did." Izuku looks a mix of proud and defeated.

"She doesn't have the hero worship blinding her." Uraraka points out.

Izuku groans.

{Kyoka sighed and picked up a tire. Maybe she was just overcomplicating things. All Might seemed to be doing ok for himself and *he* only focused on muscle strength. Besides, who else was she supposed to ask? All Might had insisted that One for All was a huge secret that only a small handful knew about, so her best option was probably just to keep learning from the master and assume that All Might knew what he was doing. He *was* the expert after all...right?}

"Not at all." Torino growls.

{*"No, Tsukauchi, I don't need either of their help. I've had One for All for decades now, I know what I'm doing!"*

Kyoka paused as she heard All Might's voice filtering through the piles of trash. She wasn't quite sure where he was, but he was talking loud enough that her enhanced hearing could pick him up easily enough, even over the sound of the waves. Whoever he was talking to obviously knew about One for All, but All Might hadn't ever told her about anyone named *Tsukauchi* before.

"I'm not saying you don't, but they might still be able to help." Tsukauchi's voice was distorted in a way that meant that this was a phone call and Kyoka was tempted to walk away so she wouldn't overhear, but if All Might was going to be giving her his quirk, he didn't have any right to keep secrets about it. *"I mean, Nana got help from Gran Torino when she was training you, right?"*}

"Good the periodic bomb drops about One for All are annoying." Izuku nods in approval.

{*"Nana only relied on Gran Torino to guide me because she knew what that monster would do to her, and to me if she left me without any guidance."* All Might said coldly. *"I can handle this! I'm going to be teaching at UA as well, so I'm going to have to learn sometime. Also, Gran Torino is absolutely terrifying. Young Jiro still has a lot of work ahead of her and I don't want him traumatizing her!"*}

"Okay fair." Izuku concedes confusing most.

{*"Well what about Nighteye."* Tsukauchi asked. *"Have you even told him you found a successor?"*

There was a long moment of silence before All Might answered, *"We haven't spoken to each other in years, Tsukauchi. I doubt telling him now would go over very well."*}

"It won't." Izuku sighs.

{Kyoka shifted the tire so that it was on her shoulder and she could grab her phone with her other hand, sending herself a message with the names All Might and this Tsukauchi dude had mentioned. Maybe there *were* other people she could ask for advice.

It never hurt to get a new perspective, right?}

Izuku is laughing again "I don't know who to be more afraid for: Jiro or All Might."

{Unlike Hitoshi's foster parents, Izuku's mom actually read the whole permission slip before looking up at them worriedly, "This...this says you might get hurt, baby. Are you sure you want to do this?"

"It's the best way to figure out what being a hero really is!" Izuku insisted, grateful for Hitoshi's presence at his side during this conversation. "I know that it looks really cool on tv and that every little kid wants to be a hero, but I'm not a little kid anymore. I know this exercise might be dangerous, but it's way more controlled than typical hero work! They have Recovery Girl, who's the best healing hero working right now, and all sorts of other precautions to keep people from getting hurt in the first place. It'll give me a good sense of what the hero industry actually is and I'd really rather know *now* if it's really too dangerous for me rather than figure that out in the middle of an actual hero fight where I could get seriously injured."}

"Using her fear against her..." Aizawa processes "He learns quick."

{"Oh…" Mom bit her lip and looked down at the paper again. "So you think this exercise will help you decide whether you can really handle being a hero?"

Even though he knew it was coming, Izuku's stomach still sank. He'd been the one to come up with the strategy of fitting their request for permission into their parents' existing prejudices, but it still stung that the only way to get his mom to say yes was to let her believe that this was the final push he needed to give up on his dream. He swallowed his nausea and forced himself to smile, "Yeah, that's basically the point of the exercise!"

Mom nodded and turned to Hitoshi, "And you're going with him?"

Hitoshi nodded, "It's safer to have someone there so we can watch each other's backs."

Mom was tense for a moment, but after it became clear that Hitoshi wasn't going to ask her a question, she relaxed and picked

up the pen, “Ok, but I need you to promise to be careful, ok baby? Don’t take any unnecessary risks and if there’s someone you don’t think you can beat, just run, ok?”

Izuku nodded and he glanced over at Hitoshi, who looked just as happy and relieved as he felt, “Don’t worry. We’ll make sure we can win.”}

On that sad note the screen shuts down for the night, the three Todoroki's not sparing anyone so much as a glance on the way to the respective dorms. The rest of the crowd slowly followed after them for hopefully a decent sleep. In the morning everyone is quieter than the day before but relaxes into their seats ready to continue.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

So ends day 5

D?ITHSP... Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Izuku Vs. Kacchan!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Battle Training

{Katsuki scowled as he got dressed in his brand-new hero costume. Many of the other boys were gawking at Deku's outfit, especially the variety of weapons strapped all over his body, including two pistols. How did he even get those? More importantly, how did a quirkless loser like him even get into UA?}

"This is gonna be a disaster." Izuku mumbles.

{Yeah, he'd admit that the strategy he'd used to beat the teacher was somewhat impressive, but the nerd didn't even do any of the work. It was the people with quirks who did all the fighting, and that was how it'd always be, so where did the stupid teachers get off on letting a useless loser like Deku into the top hero school in the country! And getting in on recommendations? What kind of a joke was that? This was supposed to be *his* epic origin story, and Deku was ruining it on purpose!}

"Wow, in hindsight I sound like a child." Bakugo grumbles.

"The fact that you can admit that is a good sign." Kirishima grins proudly.

{Whatever. Hopefully, he'd have an excuse to beat the nerd up during battle training. If not, well, there'd always be after

school.}

The word **Expelled** echoes loudly.

{“You all look like heroes!” All Might declared proudly as they all stepped out of the tunnel.

Katsuki thought it was odd that Deku wasn’t fanboying like everyone else in the class. In fact, he almost seemed nervous, like he was trying to avoid looking All Might in the eye or something. Not that Katsuki cared, but it seemed way out of character. On the other hand, All Might’s eyes kept lingering on Deku, like he knew he recognized him from somewhere, but couldn’t quite place him or something. It was really pissing Katsuki off.}

"Now *that* is going to be a disaster." Shinsou comments.

{All Might explained that they’d be fighting indoor battles in teams of two and Katsuki tuned him out. Indoor battles, teams of two, don’t forget the bomb, got it. Now stop yammering, he wanted to fight already!}

"Dude." Sero deadpans.

"I know!" Bakugo groans.

{He rolled his eyes when he was paired with the four-eyed freak. What was that extra’s quirk again? It couldn’t have been anything too cool if he hung out with Deku at lunch. All Might pulled out the first two teams to fight with a flourish and Katsuki smirked. Looks like he’d get to pound Deku into the ground sooner rather than later.}

"I hope it's bloody." Toga giggles.

{His smile widened as he saw Deku gulp and glance over at him with fear in his eyes, but fell when the nerd suddenly clenched his fists and turned to him with determination. Katsuki gave Deku his best glare before stalking off into the building with four eyes. This time, he’d make sure that loser learned his lesson.}

"A decade and some change of knowing me and he still underestimates how stubborn I am." Izuku shakes his head.

{The fake weapon was in a room on the third floor and didn’t take long to find. Iida strode up to it and knocked on the side.

The bomb made a hollow clanging sound.

“So this is the weapon we’re supposed to protect…”

Katsuki scoffed and clenched his fists. He could care less about the stupid weapon, “Hey four-eyes,” he kept looking at the door, “do you really think Deku deserves to be in the hero course?”

“You saw how well he strategized.” Iida said. “And he did get on on recommendations, a feat which escaped even me, so I believe he has earned his spot in the hero course. Why do you seem so angry when it comes to him?”}

"Good question." Izuku grumbled.

{Katsuki saw red. That nerd was tricking him all these months! Pretending to give up on being a hero, pretending that he’d finally learned how useless he really was, when all along he was training with pro heroes! Why didn’t those heroes take an interest in Katsuki? He would obviously be a better hero than Deku, everyone said so! So why did the loser get in on recommendations and get a cooler origin story than he did? Deku didn’t even have a quirk!

If there was anything that Katsuki was sure about in this exercise, it was that he was going to kill that damn nerd.}

"Not literally!" Bakugo claims.

{“Do you think they want us to memorize the floorplan?” Uraraka asked.

Izuku shrugged, “I don’t know, I already did anyway. It’s helpful to have a mental map so you don’t get lost.”

Uraraka stared at him with wide eyes before changing the subject, “You know, All Might’s just as cool in person as he is on television! I’m glad he’s not threatening to expel us like Aizawa did.”}

"Nice to know I'm doing something right." All Might chuckles as Aizawa rolls his eyes at the man.

{Izuku sat silently for a minute, the paper in his hand becoming hopelessly wrinkled from how tightly he was gripping it. Between

realizing that he'd have to deal with the hero that had tried to crush his dreams for the whole semester and being faced with Kacchan who he knew would try to kill him, his nerves were shot. Suddenly, Izuku remembered that it was probably appropriate to say something when a girl asked you a question, "Yeah. Sure."}

"You can feel the stress rolling off him." Ojirou comments.

{Uraraka looked at him with concern, "Are you ok, Deku? You look kinda tense."

Izuku sighed, "It's just we're going up against Kaachan. Plus Iida's pretty strong too. We should be on our guard, who knows what they'll pull."

"Oh right, Bakugo's the one who's always making fun of you."

Izuku nodded, "He can be a pain, but his strength, his confidence, his ambition, not to mention his quirk, they're all so much greater than mine."

"He's pretty mad that you're at UA, isn't he?" Uraraka asked.

Izuku gave a breathy laugh, "Yep. That's why he's going to come after me as soon as All Might says go. It doesn't matter that the safer strategy would be for him to guard the bomb and send Iida out to find us. For him, this is personal and nothing anyone says is going to convince him otherwise." He stood. "But that's why I have to do better. I refuse to lose today."}

"That's familiar." Uraraka smiles.

{Uraraka got a strange glint in her eye, "So it's a fated battle between rivals, huh?"

"Not that I'm trying to get you wrapped up in my fight or anything!" Izuku waved his arms in denial.

"Are you kidding?" Uraraka laughed and hit a fist against her palm. "Let's win this!"}

"That day would have been so much worse without you." Izuku elbows Uraraka lightly.

{All Might's voice came over the speaker, making them jump, "Your time starts now!"

Immediately, Izuku snapped into analyst mode, “Ok, so they’re probably expecting us to come in through the front door. Can you use your quirk on yourself?”

Uraraka grimaced, “Only as a last resort. It makes me really sick.”

Izuku nodded, then grabbed his grappling hook from its holster, shot it so that it lodged into the wall right above the fourth-story window, and handed it to Uraraka, “Ok, so this button will retract it and this one will dislodge the hook from wherever it is. If you need to shoot it again, just aim and press this button right here. Got it?”}

"That type of tool would pair well with your quirk." Todoroki mentions.

"Yeah, I could make a wrist-mounted one!" Mei claims excitedly already designing it.

{Uraraka looked overwhelmed, but nodded, “Is it strong enough to handle both of us?”

Izuku looked up at the building, “It doesn’t need to be. I’ll be going in through the front door and leading Kacchan on a wild goose chase. You’ll find Iida and the bomb. Get it if you can, but if not, just tell me where it is and I’ll try to beat Kaachan and come help you.”

“Are you sure you can handle him on your own?” Uraraka asked worriedly.

Izuku smiled, “Kacchan may have bombs,” he patted the holster on his thigh, “but I have guns.”}

"Hell yeah!"
"Kick his ass!"
"Fight, fight, fight!"

{Uraraka smiled and nodded before pressing the button to retract the hook and swinging through the open window, pulling the hook through behind her. Izuku waited a moment before walking in through the front door. He’d taken a lot of notes on indoor battles over the years, but even more so since he’d started working with underground heroes. He’d even done an indoor battle during the drug cartel raid, so the setting didn’t scare him. His opponent, however, did.}

"Considering the history that's understandable." Hound Dog comments.

{Suddenly, Kacchan rounded a corner, aiming an explosion right at Izuku's face. He rolled out of the way, just in time, thankful for the fast reflexes he'd gotten from his specialized training. Thick smoke and dust filled the hallway and through his com, he heard Uraraka quietly ask if he was ok.

Kacchan emerged from the smoke with a sneer on his face, "What's the matter, Deku. If you're afraid to stand up and fight me, maybe a quirkless coward like you shouldn't be at UA."

Izuku stood up tall and looked him in the eye, "I knew you'd come at me first and try to take me by surprise."

Kaachan grinned, "I don't wanna hurt you so bad that they have to stop the fight," he yelled as he prepared to throw a quirk-loaded punch, "but I wanna come close!"}

"I should have stopped it then and there." All Might sighed.

"You think?" Aizawa snarked.

{Izuku grabbed Kacchan's arm and flipped him over his shoulder, "You always use a big right hook to start a fight, Kaachan." He panted. "I know because I've watched you for years. Maybe you should have paid more attention to that notebook you burned and threw away. Those analyses are what caught the attention of the heroes that recommended me." He grits his teeth as Kaachan began to get up, "You can call me Deku, but I'm not the same defenseless helpless kid anymore! From now on, Deku is the name of a hero!"}

"Wooo!"
"Claim it!"
"You tell him!"

{Kaachan lowered himself into a battle stance, "Deku," he growled, "you're shaking in your boots just looking at me, but you want to fight me anyway." His hands started popping with explosions. "That's why I hate you!"}

"This kid makes no sense." Dabi groans.

{Kacchan launched himself at Izuku who tried to wrap the capture tape around his ankle. Next, Izuku knew that Kacchan

would get impatient and try to end the fight with a big punch, which he dodged. Kacchan was starting to mix up his moves, so did that mean he was worried?

If he couldn't easily predict his moves, it wouldn't be smart to fight him in close range. Izuku turned and ran down the hall before the smoke cleared, trying to come up with a plan. He heard Bakugo scream in rage, "You've been laughing behind my back, Deku! Getting at all these heroes just to make me look bad! You're just a quirkless nobody, Deku! You'll never beat me!}

"Yes because everything in my life revolves around you." Izuku snaps and then takes a deep breath.

{Izuku knew that if he went and helped Uraraka now, Kacchan would just follow him. So he had to take him down here. He'd taken down actual villains though, something Kacchan hadn't ever done, so he knew he could do it, just as long as he didn't get too close to Kacchan's hands.

"Stop hiding, Deku!"

Izuku thought back to all the times he'd tried to assure Kacchan that he wasn't trying to compete with him or be better than him, only to get bruises and burns for his troubles. His eyes lit up with determination. Maybe it was time to change his attitude.}

"Yes, it is, kero." Tsu agrees.

{"Deku?" Uraraka's voice came over the radio. "Iida knows I'm here, sorry. He's monologuing right now, though."

Izuku nodded and gripped the capture tape. They were probably running low on time. It was time to stop messing around and beat Kacchan. He heard footsteps behind him and turned around to see Kacchan smiling at him as he slowly walked closer.

"Since you're such a stalker, you probably already know that my quirk works by exploding my sweat, so just imagine what I could do if I had a lot of it." Izuku's eyes widened as Kacchan slowly pulled the pin on his gauntlets. "That's right, these babies aren't just for show!"}

"He didn't." Monoma gawked.

"1A doesn't look surprised." Awase pointed out.

"Which means it did happen." Kendo sighs.

{“Bakugo!” All Might’s voice came over the radio, “Don’t do it! You’ll kill him!”

“He’ll be fine as long as he dodges!” Bakugo grinned widely and finished pulling the pin, letting loose a massive explosion.}

"How was he not expelled for this?" Shigaraki asks.

"Fuck if I know." Dabi huffs.

{“Come in! Come in, Midoriya!” All Might was practically screaming through the radio and Izuku hissed in pain. He’d managed to roll behind a pillar just in time to dodge the explosion, but it had done nothing to shield him from the heat. He knew he probably had at least first-degree burns all over his body just from being too close to that blast. Who had approved that thing? He’d had to train for months to be able to carry a gun and Bakugo just comes in with enough firepower to blow through the wall?}

"I should review the support safety measures when we get back." Maijima admits.

"I agree." Tsukauchi states sternly.

{Kacchan had just tried to kill him! Something finally clicked in Izuku’s brain and he remembered what Nighteye had said. He was right, Kacchan...no, Katsuki, hadn’t been his friend in a long time. Izuku smiled as an idea occurred to him and he silently held himself closer to the pillar as he drew one of his guns from its holster.

“These gauntlets are awesome!” Katsuki cackled. “Even if you give it all you’ve got, you’ll never beat me!”

Izuku waited for the smoke to clear, so he could aim properly. Katsuki would be expecting him to be curled on the ground in the fetal position. It would throw him for a loop when he was nowhere to be seen.

“Huh?” Katsuki looked around then ran over to the hole in the wall and looked down to see if Izuku had been thrown from the building in the explosion, “Deku, where’d you go?”}

"Here it comes." Kaminari grinned.

{Two gunshots rang out clearly as Izuku fired, hitting Katsuki with a rubber bullet to each bicep, right where Tsukauchi had taught him would cause enough pain to temporarily paralyze the arm. Katsuki's eyes widened as Izuku ran at him and swiped his legs out from under him, landing him flat on his back. Quickly Izuku took the capture tape and wrapped it around each of Katsuki's wrists before standing.

"Bakugo has been captured by the hero team!"}

"Yeah!"
"Nice!"
"Good job!"
"He did it!"

{"You've always been amazing, Katsuki." Izuku looked down at Katsuki as his eyes widened at the lack of a nickname. "That's why I had to beat you. I'm coming, Uraraka. Where are you?"

"Fifth floor, hurry! Iida cleared the room of everything except the weapon, so I don't have any ammo for my quirk!"}

"You should get a throwing weapon." Mei mentions.

Uraraka nods along "Totally."

{Izuku turned and ran, making his way up the stairs as quickly as he could. He could hear Iida laughing evilly and monologuing. He opened his pocket and grabbed a small box of rubber bullets that he kept on him in case he had to reload. He tossed a smoke bomb inside the room to cover him as he ran toward Uraraka and shoved the box into her hands, then pulled out his gun and ducked behind another pillar. Uraraka immediately started pelting Iida with weightless bullets, turning the room into a giant pinball machine and forcing Iida to spend all his energy dodging.}

"That looks like a nightmare." Iida complains.

"Nah, that looks hilarious." Shinsou teases.

{"Where are you, hero?" Iida yelled, "You may have taken down my partner, but there is no way I will go down so easily! Hiding is an act of cowardice."

“Or an act of intelligence,” Izuku said cheekily as he stepped out from behind the pillar and shot Iida in the leg. Oh, Brave would be so proud. Uraraka released her quirk and all the ricocheting projectiles fell to the floor as their gravity returned. She ran over and touched the bomb as Izuku tied Iida up with capture tape.}

"A well-executed plan indeed." Nedzu sips his tea.

{“The hero team wins!”

“Deku!” Uraraka cried as she flung herself at Izuku and wrapped her arms around him. “We did it!”

Izuku hissed in pain as she squeezed his burns. He’d hardly felt the pain during the fight, but now that the adrenaline was going down he realized just how much having first-degree burns over his whole body *hurt*.

“Deku?” Uraraka jumped back. “Are you ok?”

Izuku gave her a shaky smile, then promptly passed out.}

"Yeah that tracks." Uraraka chuckled.

"Now to watch my kidnapping." Todoroki sighs with his arm crossed.

The rest of the squad wince, glancing over to Dabi to see him in the same stance as their friend. Unknowing what to say they simply lean closer to him as the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Villains attack the UA training camp.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Training camp

{The UA traitor rolled his eyes at his classmates' antics as the bus rolled to a stop. He quickly sent a text sharing his location with Shigaraki. This would show those class-A assholes.}

"Why me?" Monoma whined.

{Why did Shouto have to be paired with *Bakugo* of all people for the test of courage. It wasn't that he hated him, it was just that Bakugo was just so *loud*. They were almost at the halfway point when they saw smoke in the distance.

"Hey Icy-Hot, I thought you never used your fire…"

"I don't." Shouto said. "I didn't light that."

"Well then who did? Because we're the only ones here with fire quirks and it sure as hell wasn't me."}

"Just wait." Ashido chuckles nervously.

{Shouto looked around as he prepared to use his ice, "Be quiet."

"Don't tell me what to do, Icy-hot!"

"Be quiet! There might be villains!"

Bakugo scowled, “If this is some trick by those class B losers…”}

"None of us are that stupid." Tetsutetsu growled.

{Shouto rolled his eyes, at least he wasn’t yelling anymore. The boys both crinkled their noses as a smell like rotten eggs started wafting through the forest along with a pink mist.

“What the..?” Shouto put his hand over his nose as he began to feel lightheaded, “This smoke is poisonous, we have to get out of here.”}

"Hurry please." Kendo comments.

{“No shit, Sherlock!” Bakugo growled, keeping his own mouth and nose plugged.

They ran away from the smoke, coming across a class B student who had passed out on the trail. Shouto hesitated a moment before putting the boy on his back. Heroes never saved him, but maybe he could save this classmate. They continued on, slower than before due to the extra weight.}

"I didn't hesitate like that." Todoroki comments.

"He's not you, not really." Izuku reminds his friend.

{Because he was no longer covering his face, Shouto got lightheaded much quicker than he had before and it was only the practice he had working through the pain of his father’s training that kept him going. That was probably why it took him longer than it should have to see the black figure kneeling on the path in front of them.}

Endeavour's grip on his seat tightened.

{“Who’s that?” Bakugo asked, then he noticed the severed hand, “Which group was in front of us again?”

“Tokoyami, I think…” Shouto replied softly, trying not to think that the hand might be one of theirs “And Shoji.”

“...so pretty…” The figure whispered, “No! Have to work...but it’s so delicious…beautiful flesh…” The man turned around, revealing a wide mouth held open with hooks. Despite the fact that the man’s eyes were covered, Shouto could feel he was

looking straight at them, “...I have a job to do…”}

All the members who met Moonfish scrunched their noses and shivered at the madman's words.

{Aizawa watched in horror as his capture weapon went *through* the villain.

As the flame villain melted into goo, he smirked, “I wonder if you can save your students?”}

"Not bad with the fear-mongering." Shigaraki comments.

"I thought so." Dabi straightens just a bit.

{“Mr. Aizawa! Help!” Eraser looked to see Ida running out of the woods ask fast as he could, panic on his face.

“Show me your Blood!” a giant villain barreled after him, muscle fibers bulging. Aizawa’s eyes widened as he recognized Muscular and he activated his quirk.

“What the…? What did you do?” Muscular screamed as he deflated, but Aizawa quickly wrapped him in his capture weapon and kneed the villain in the face, knocking him out before blinking. He took in the sight of Muscular’s blood-coated fists}

"DAMNIT!" Izuku interrupts, standing and starting to pace the front of the room with tears in his eyes.

Uraraka stands to go after him "Deku! What's wrong?"

"Kota!" He shouts back.

"What the fuck is a 'Kota'?" Shigaraki gripes.

Izuku rounds on him furious "The child that was killed because you were *stupid* enough to bring an indiscriminate murderer to a *kidnapping*." He steps closer "Did you actually think he *wouldn't* kill Kacchan if he got the chance!?"

Bakugo chimes in "The cannibal creep didn't even *try* to capture me!"

"Thank you Kacchan!" Izuku's breathing is heavy as he waits for the villain's reply.

Shigaraki Stares Izuku down for a moment "I know better *now*."

With a frustrated growl Izuku returns to his seat and his friends' comfort.

{_before turning back to Iida, “Are you alright?”

Iida nodded, “The rest of our classmates should be along shortly, I told them to hide because I was the only one able to outrun the villain.”}

"That's good Iida." Tsu compliments.

{Aizawa nodded, “Good work. Head inside, Vlad King is already waiting for you with the other students. I’ll be back!”

He didn’t look to see if Iida obeyed as he ran into the woods. If he had heard the flame villain correctly, his students were the targets. He had to save them, or at least get to Mandalay and give them permission to fight back. His heart gripped in panic, it was like the USJ all over again, only this time the villains wouldn’t let the students live because they’d already got what they wanted. The students *were* what they wanted, which was infinitely worse.}

"That night was a nightmare." Aizawa sighs.

"For all of us." Vlad agreed.

{The only students he passed as he ran were Ojirou, Mineta, and Kouda, who promised to go straight to camp. It wasn’t long before he reached the clearing where the test of courage was supposed to begin. A lizard-looking villain with a sword made out of other swords was bearing down on Mandalay and Aizawa managed to pull her out of the way with his capture weapon just in time to prevent her from being cut into ribbons.

“Mandalay, are you alright?”

“Eraser! Have you seen Kota?”}

Collective flinch

{Aizawa felt his stomach sink, “No, I haven’t, but I need you to send a message to all the students. Tell them to use their quirks and training, that I’m authorizing them to engage in combat with the villains.”

Mandalay looked shocked, “Are you sure?”

Aizawa nodded, “I’ll take the heat. Our students are the targets and they need to be able to defend themselves.”}

"I approve." Nedzu agrees.

{“Ahh,” A large woman in sunglasses said as she ran at them, “Who squealed?”}

Toga giggled "It wasn't a secret Magne."

{“Wait!” The lizard villain cried, “That’s Eraserhead, he’s an underground hero and if Stain were still alive, he would likely judge him a true hero!”

Aizawa wasn’t quite sure how he felt about that, but the important part was that the villains were too busy arguing to attack.}

"Capitalize on it." Brave suggests.

{“So what?”

“So we must be sure we’re abiding by Stain’s princip…” the lizard villain was cut off by a kick to the head from Mandalay at the same time the other villain was knocked out by Tiger.}

Dabi snorts "Pay attention."

{“Thank you for the help, Eraserhead,” Tiger said as Mandalay sent the message to the students, “Things were getting kind of rough there.”

“Where are Pixie Bob and Ragdoll?”

Tiger looked behind him and Aizawa paled as he saw Pixie Bob lying on the ground, “Ragdoll hasn’t checked in.”

Aizawa took a deep breath, he couldn’t worry about that right now, “Get her back to camp, I need to go look for the rest of the students.”

Tiger nodded as Aizawa ran further into the woods.}

"Please make it in time." Midnight begged.

{Shouto put up another ice wall to stop the blades, careful to avoid the class B-boy he'd laid on the ground, "Don't just rush into this fight Bakugo!"

"Whatever Icy-Hot! We've been given permission to fight so that's what I'm gonna do!"}

There was a loud **smack**, everyone assumes somebody facepalmed, but no one tries to figure out who.

{Shouto swore as Moonfish dodged his ice wall again and took off into the trees, "This guy's quirk is too good at navigating this terrain."

"This freak looks like a scrawny little sidekick to me!" He shifted into a battle stance, "Come at me, you bastard!"

"You can't use your explosions Bakugo! You could start a forest fire and kill our classmates!"

"Whatever, Icy-hot, I'm not an idiot."}

"Debatable." Dabi grumbled.

{Todoroki doubted that. Right now, Bakugo was acting just like Endeavor. Take down the villain, show his own strength, and don't care who gets hurt in the process. He looked behind him, where the wall of poison gas was now clearly visible. Between Moonfish and the gas, they didn't have anywhere to run.}

"That *was* the point." Shigaraki states.

{Bakugo ran at Moonfish with an explosion, breaking some of the blade teeth and causing the villain to cry out in pain. Bakugo smirked.

"Watch out!" Shouto cried as Moonfish's blade teeth flashed, but Bakugo couldn't move out of the way in time. He grits his teeth in pain as he was stabbed through the shoulder.

"You fucker!" He yelled, "I'll kill you!"

Shouto knew he should send an ice wall to protect his classmate, but he could already feel hypothermia setting in. That combined with the gas was making it almost impossible to think straight.}

"I was already using my fire by that point." Todoroki sighs.

{“...flesh...blood...sweet…” Moonfish stabbed Bakugo again, but this time he got close enough for the student to grab his face.

“Die.” Bakugo screamed and let off a full-force explosion in Moonfish’s face. Shouto idly wondered if it was bigger than the one he used during his fight with Ururaka at the sports festival. When the smoke cleared, several trees were smoking and the villain was heavily singed and unconscious.

“Weak ass villain.” Bakugo spits a dollop of blood on the ground before looking at Shouto, who just barely had time to wonder about the look of alarm on his face before he felt himself collapse like a telescope. By the time the nauseating sensation had ended, he was surrounded by blue glass walls and neither Bakugo nor the forest were anywhere to be seen.}

Bakugo winced "Yeah, not puking took some effort after that."

{Ururaka and Tsu shifted into battle stances as they stared down the villain in front of them.}

Toga gasped "Oh, the memories!"

{“What kind of person slashes someone out of nowhere?” Tsu said, “Who do you think you are?”

The girl pointed at them with a bloody knife, “I’m Toga! You two are super cute, Ururaka and Asui.”

“She must know who we are from the sports festival,” Ururaka said.}

"That was so creepy." Uraraka comments.

"It's also something we should get used to, kero." Tsu agrees.

{“But we don’t know *anything* about her, so we’re at a disadvantage,” Tsu replied.}

"A normal situation in heroics." Gran gripes.

{“There’s not enough blood,” Toga pouted, “Normally, I’d suck it straight out of the cut to get it flowing, but there’s no time. Don’t worry, girls, my fun new toy will start pumping as soon as I stick it in you. I’ll get my fill in no time!” She looked at them from beneath her lashes, “Who’s first?”

Tsu threw Uraraka in the air with her tongue the moment Toga started running, “You have to get back to camp! We have permission to defend ourselves, not counterattack! Ahh!” Tsu cried out as Toga slashed her tongue.}

"That's not what I meant." Aizawa groaned.

{“Tsu!” Ururaka yelled.

Toga stopped for a moment, “Tsu? That’s so cute! I think I’ll call you that too!”

Tsu backed away in fear, “Only my friends call me that!”

Toga laughed as she pinned Tsu against a tree with a needle, “I guess that means we’re friends then! You’re so cute when you bleed!”}

"So not manly." Kirishima mutters.

{“Get away from her!” Ururaka yelled. Toga turned and came at her with the knife, but Ururaka used her Gunhead martial arts and pinned her to the ground.

“That was amazing, Ochako!”

“Ochako? You’re cute too!” Toga stabbed her in the leg and let her machine pull the blood out.}

"So the bloody chick has some of Uraraka's blood just tucked away for a rainy day?" Shinsou asked tensely.

"Yep, and it gets worse." She replies.

"How?"

Izuku interrupts "She can transform into people whose blood she drinks."

"Fuck."

{“Uraraka!” Aizawa called out her name as he ran into the clearing and activated his quirk.

“Aizawa-sensei!” Tsu cried in relief, “You have to help her!”

Toga jumped away from Ururaka and ran off into the forest, “I

don’t feel like being killed tonight,” she giggled, “Toodles!”}

"Why does she think heroes and their students are going to kill her?" Jiro asks.

"If I'd hazard a guess I'd say Endeavour.”

{“Ururaka,” Aizawa knelt beside her on the ground, “You’re hurt.”

She shook her head, “It’s not bad.”

“Good,” He nodded, then stood, “Make your way back to camp, I’ve cleared the forest between here and there, so you should be fine if you hurry.”}

"Hopefully." All Might comments.

{Ururaka nodded and the girls were about to leave when they heard rustling in the trees. All three tensed and prepared to fight, but instead of a villain, it was Bakugo who entered the clearing. He was carrying another student on his back and looked halfway between exploding and crying.}

A hand clasped over his shoulder but Bakugo couldn't look away.

{“Bakugo?” Aizawa said, “You were paired with Todoroki for the exercise, where is he?”

Bakugo shook his head, “They took him. Those damn bastards stole Icy-hot!”

Aizawa’s stomach dropped, this was bad. In terms of worst possible scenarios, a kidnapped student was pretty high on the list, “Did you see where they took him?”

Bakugo just shook his head again, “It was some asshole in a yellow coat. He collapsed Icy-hot into a fucking marble and took off through the treetops. I tried to follow them, but..” he grimaced, “I overused my quirk fighting the one who was trying to kill us and the bastard was too fast for me to follow on foot.” All of a sudden he screamed and kicked at the base of a tree, “I just feel so fucking helpless!”}

"We all can relate to that." Kaminari sighed.

{Aizawa put a hand on his shoulder, “Bakugo, you and the girls

get this student back to safety. There's not much else you can do out here anyway if you're suffering from quirk exhaustion. I'll find Todoroki."

Bakugo looked like he wanted to argue, but instead, he just scoffed, "Fine. They were headed east when I lost track of them."

Aizawa nodded and ran east. It was a long shot, but if there was any possibility Todoroki was still here, he had to try and save him.}

"I don't like the odds." Aizawa sighs.

{"Now we just gotta wait for the others to regroup here. This place was supposed to be hard to find because of the wall of flames and poisonous gas," Dabi sighed, "but it looks like the gas is gone."}

"Damn right it is!" Tetsutetsu cheers.

{Aizawa hid in the trees, following the flame villain from earlier and a guy named Twice who kept arguing with himself. At one point he'd seen Aoyama cowering behind some bushes, but Aizawa had just put a finger to his lips and gestured for him to leave.

Aizawa wanted nothing more than to take both villains down right now, but he held himself back. Bakugo had said the one who stole Todoroki had a yellow coat, and the forest was large enough that Aizawa would never be able to find him on his own. His only hope was to follow Dabi and Twice to the meet-up point and retake Todoroki from the villain who had him.}

"Smart." Shigaraki grinned.

{Dabi and Twice stopped walking as Toga emerged from the trees.

"Hey, Crazy, did you get the blood? How many different kinds?" Dabi asked.

"One person!"

"Just one?" Twice whined, *"Good job!* Weren't you supposed to get three?"

“That’s just the way it went down. I thought those brats were gonna kill me and then a pro showed up!”}

"I don't want it assumed that I will *kill* my opponents." Tokoyami grumbles.

"I know." Shoji whispers.

{“Whatever, it’s fine.” Twice said, “*Shouldn’t you be full of shame?”*

“Both of you shut up.” Dabi ordered, “You’re too loud. Welcome, Mr. Compress. You get the kid?”

Aizawa moved the moment a yellow-coated figure jumped down from the trees, tripping him with the capture weapon and activating his quirk. A ripping sound filled the clearing and suddenly Mr. Compress’s coat was in tatters and Todoroki was kneeling on the ground looking disoriented.

“Todoroki!” Aizawa ran toward him and saw his eyes widen before a massive wall of blue flame blocked his field of vision.}

"So close!"
"Damnit!"
"He was right there!"

{“It’s been five minutes since the signal,” a voice declared, “let’s go.”

Aizawa activated his quirk and tried to see anyone, but the flames were too bright and Dabi made sure to stay hidden behind them so Aizawa couldn’t see him. When the flames finally disappeared, Aizawa readied his capture weapon for the fight and looked around for the villains.

But all he saw was an empty forest.}

No one has much to say somber as they are. In the quiet Headcase quickly begins the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:TGG Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Izuku starts online school.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Progress

{Izuku blinked rapidly, half-convinced that he was reading the words wrong. A 96% on the entrance exam? How...how was that even possible? There must have been some mistake, right? Izuku was too dumb to be able to ace the entire entrance exam when he hadn't even had time to do it twice! But... there was Izuku's name at the top of the email, clear as day, and the letter had arrived in his inbox, so it must be for him…}

"I knew it!"
"Of course he aced it!"
"Nice job!"

{"Mom!" He yelled so that she could hear him from the kitchen. "Can you come here? I need to make sure I'm reading this right!"}

"He really does doubt himself that much." Ojirou sighs.

{Mom nearly slid down the hall in her hurry to open his bedroom door, "What is it, Izuku? What's wrong?"

Izuku simply leaned back and pointed to the screen. He held his breath as Mom leaned over to read the email. He didn't know what he was even hoping for. He didn't want to get his hopes up, because there wasn't any way he'd passed, but if Mom read the

same thing he did…

“Oh, Izuku!” Mom turned to him with tears in her eyes that were at odds with the brilliant smile on her face. “Congratulations! You got in! I knew you could do it!”

Izuku continued... staring at the screen in shock as Mom sank to her knees and hugged him, “I-I got in. I got in!”}

"Yeah!"
"You did it!"
"Congratulations!"
"No more bullies!"

{Mom chuckled as he hugged him even tighter, “You did! This is going to be so good for you, Izuku! I’ll call Aldera first thing in the morning and do the paperwork. Oh! This calls for a celebration, do you want to go out?”

Izuku shook his head and held up his cast, “I, uh, don’t want to risk running into anyone.”}

A wince, "That's fair." Koda comments.

{Mom’s eyes shone in understanding, “How about some ice cream, then? I can go pick some up while you register for your classes.”

Izuku nodded and Mom smiled and ruffled his hair before she left. Izuku turned back to the email and clicked on the link to sign up for classes. The first step was to make sure he was registered for all the required classes, such as science, math, and literature. Then he had to take one foreign language class, so he ended up registering for English since that was what the school recommended.

The problem was that he also had to take three elective classes, but...Izuku had never really had any hobbies outside of being a hero, which obviously wasn’t going to happen. He frowned as he scrolled through his options. Art might be fine, it would help make his notebooks more detailed if nothing else, so he added that class before he could start to doubt himself. But that still left two classes.}

"Little Green Bean doing art!" Midnight squealed.

{He was most of the way down the list of electives by the time another class caught his eye. *Quirk Theory* . That could be interesting! Analyzing quirks was one of his favorite parts of watching hero fights, and Eraserhead had mentioned that analyzing villains' quirks would help him fight better, so it wouldn't hurt to learn more about them! But, that still left one final elective. He should probably choose something to do with a hobby, but Izuku really didn't have any hobbies outside of being a vigilante, and somehow he didn't think that his new school would let him count that as an elective.}

"I would hope not." Aizawa snarks.

{Thinking of his vigilantism made Izuku restless. It had been almost a week and a half since he'd gone out and he was really starting to miss it. His body had gotten used to waking up in the middle of the night, so he was spending a few hours every night just staring at the ceiling and reminding himself that Mom would never forgive him if he somehow managed to re-break his arm and that if he did, then he'd have to explain *how* he'd broken it again, and that would just make her worry too much.}

"At least he's resting?" Uraraka tries.

"Yes, that is preferable." Iida assures.

{His only consolation about the whole thing was that he knew that none of the heroes were missing him. In fact, they were probably just grateful that he was staying out of the way, and he knew he was being selfish for wanting to feel useful again, but...he just wished there was some way he could still help while he was healing. It would be amazing if he had a quirk that let him see the streets remotely, then he could just call the heroes and send them to where they were needed. It didn't even have to be a quirk! If he even had some sort of drone he could fly without being suspicious, or even just some sort of camera…}

"I'd suggest hacking like our friend Cheat Code." Nedzu remarks.

"I think Shadows mentioned it too." Aizawa adds.

"Let's not forget Mastermind's *program*." Tsukauchi growls.

{Izuku sat straight up. Security cameras! Why hadn't he thought of that before? They were all over the city, and sure, they didn't cover every alleyway, but they had to be better than nothing! It

was probably completely useless since there was no way that a Deku like him would be able to become good enough at hacking to be able to access the city's security cameras without getting caught, but...well, he needed another elective anyway and programming would be a good skill for the future.}

"It's a start." Izuku sighs.

{He found a class on programming basics and signed up just as Mom arrived with the ice cream. He knew he shouldn't get his hopes up, it would only hurt that much more when everything went wrong again.}

"And it's sad again." Kaminari groans.

{Shouta was struggling to focus on his investigation. Really, he hadn't known viridian for that long, so why should he be this affected by the fact that he...disappeared. He just disappeared. Shouta didn't have any evidence to the contrary and it was completely illogical to assume the worst possible outcome. But he also didn't want to keep his hopes up, only for the kid to have been dead the whole time, just like…}

Aizawa, Yamada, and Kayama flinch.

{Well, he should be getting back to work. There had been more and more cases of instant villains in the last few weeks, and the last time this had happened, it had been followed by the next-level villains. It was almost as though whoever was behind the villain factory was gauging the potential for villains the same way he did for heroes.

This led to the next major mystery. Before his disappearance, Hamasaki had said something about the symbol of evil. The phrase tickled at the back of Shouta's brain, like he'd read it somewhere before, but hadn't paid any attention to it, but try as he might, he just couldn't remember the significance of the epitaph. It seemed to have some significance to Tsukauchi, but when Shouta had pressed him for answers, he'd simply said that it wasn't important. He'd said that it couldn't be the man he thought it was because that one was already dead and had been for years. Shouta just hoped he was imagining the way that Tsukauchi had gone pale during the conversation.}

"That's going to be an uncomfortable conversation." Tsukauchi sighs.

{It was frustrating. The biggest lead they'd ever gotten about the villain factory, and it was a dead end. So what next? It just wasn't practical to put every single trigger user in protective custody in case the factory started abducting again, so they were on the back foot until the villains made another move. If only they knew what kinds of quirks appealed to the villain factory. Shouta knew that it wasn't necessarily strong quirks, because they had a lot of ways to strengthen them artificially, but there didn't seem to be any common denominator between the victims who got abducted and those that didn't.}

"Random is so much scarier than a pattern." Ashido shivers.

{If only the kid were still...of course, even if he was alive, it wouldn't be fair to bring him into such a dangerous investigation. Even if he was a vigilante, he was still a semi-suicidal teenager who wasn't prepared to deal with the danger that came from investigations like this. But still, the kid had a talent for quirk analysis. He hadn't been able to spend a lot of time with the notebook, but from what he'd read, he had a sneaking suspicion that if anyone could figure out how the villain factory was picking their victims, it was Viridian.}

Izuku blushes as his friends lay on the agreements.

{If Katsuki didn't know he was the best, he might be tempted to think he was an idiot. Seriously, how hadn't he noticed how messed up Aldera was? Were their teachers secretly villains or something? Because that was kinda the only explanation Katsuki could think of that would explain how they willfully ignored kids getting beat up right in front of them.}

"Depends on the world." Headcase comments.

"What does that mean?" Bakugo asks gruffly.

Headcase turns to him and, loud enough for everyone to hear replies "There are worlds where Aldera is, *straight up*, run by a quirk supremacist cult."

After a moment of silence Izuku states "That would make too much sense."

{And that wasn't even getting into the verbal bullying that happened right in the middle of class. The teachers didn't ignore

that, but Katsuki thought ignoring it would be preferable to what they were doing. They seemed to be actively creating opportunities for the students to make fun of the less popular students, and often joined in the mockery by publicly shaming students for tiny offenses that wouldn't even get Katsuki a sideways glance.}

"Now *that* did happen to me." Izuku huffs.

"I wonder if Nedzu will let us demolish the school when he's done with the people." Shinsou remarks.

"I suspect he will." Iida chops.

{It was messed up. But what was even more messed up was that Katsuki didn't know how to stop it. He was supposed to be the best, but he wasn't about to pretend that he had any sort of moral authority here. He'd bullied Deku and all those other extras for years, so he couldn't just turn around and tell others to stop.}

"That does sound difficult." Hawks considers.

{Why had he even stopped? It had taken Deku literally saving his life to even get him to lay off the nerd, not that he'd ever forgive Deku for that, but still...he'd fucked up way too badly to say anything now.}

"Close but no cigar." Mirko snarked.

{The best that he could do was stop acting like a villain. He'd thought it was pretty clever to volunteer at that villain rehabilitation group. Volunteering and shit always looked good on hero school applications, and maybe he'd even be able to learn something or some shit without jeopardizing his clean record. Not that he deserved a clean record, but...he *needed* to be a hero. He wasn't about to let his idiot teachers ruin his chances at being the number one hero just because they couldn't be bothered to do their fucking jobs.}

"And you will be." Kirishima cheered.

{That Amplifier bitch had sent him home with some paperwork to do, but he'd be attending the next meeting. He'd just have to deal with being in the same room with villains without exploding them on sight. Katsuki glanced over at his teacher, who was correcting essays while Fingers scratched at that one kid who

could make bubbles.

At least he was getting some practice.}

"It's slow going but you're getting better." Sero grins.

"In one world." Kaminari teases.

"Whatever!" Bakugo shoves them all away.

"Easy Blasty, we're proud of you." Ashido hugs the blond.

"You know it!" Kirishima cheers.

"Whatever." Bakugo replies a little quieter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

The chaos duo runs more experiments on their extra credit project.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Noise

{"You rely on your quirk too much."

Izuku almost felt bad saying it, especially since Shinso was taking time out of his day to talk to them during lunch. His quirk was amazing, so, of course, he relied on it, and it was part of him, so Izuku couldn't discount that, but…}

"No, yeah, Aizawa said pretty much the same." Shinsou groaned.

{"Yep!" Mei piped up, shoveling a spoonful of rice into her mouth. "But don't feel bad! Most heroes do, but that's why you have us!"

Shinso looked at them skeptically, "And how am I supposed to be a hero without my quirk?"}

"That is *not* what they said." Uraraka huffs.

{Izuku waved his hands frantically in front of him, "Not without your quirk! We would *never* tell you to hold yourself back like that! It's just that...well, you see…"

"It's the activation requirements." Mei interrupted. "You're pretty good at making people respond to you, but eventually you're going to come across someone who has more self-control than you have sass."}

"Unless they start monologuing." Toga snickers.

"Shut up!" Shigaraki and Dabi snap in unison.

{Izuku couldn't hold back a huff of shocked laughter, "Yeah. What she said. The fact is that once people know about your quirk, you have a huge handicap. It would be like if a villain immediately took Snipe's gun at the beginning of a fight. He would still have his quirk, but he wouldn't be able to use it."

"The only difference here is that Snipe can use his quirk to protect his gun, you can't." Mei thought for a moment. "He also carries an extra gun. Izu-Kun! Let's give Extra-Credit-Kun a gun!!!"}

"Not without proper trainin'" Snipe corrects.

{Shinso looked at them in shock and a bit of fear, so Izuku figured he wasn't *quite* ready for that, despite the amazing potential the idea had, "Maybe let's start with something smaller, like how we can prevent villains from finding out about his quirk."

"Nice thought." Shinso pointed at them with his chopsticks. "But that's the thing about my quirk. If you fall for it once, you know how it works."

"Maybe…" Izuku flipped through his notebook until he found a page that he'd used to scribble ideas. "How long does your connection last?"

Shinso shrugged, "No idea. I've never been allowed to control someone for more than a few minutes. That experiment with you the other day was as long as I've ever gone."

"That's not what I…" Izuku had to take a second to gather his thoughts. "I mean, that's good to know, but how long can you wait between getting a response and taking control?"}

Izuku grins.

{Shinso looked surprised, then thoughtful, "I don't know. I always thought it was best to just take control as soon as I can, so I've never actually tried to wait or anything…"

Izuku grinned and flipped to a new page in his notebook, "Perfect! So, how do you know the connection has been formed? Do you have to try to brainwash them or can you just feel it?"

"I can feel it." Shinso said quietly. "It's like the person is inside my brain... I'm sorry, I shouldn't have told you that. I don't want to make you uncomfortable."}

"Stop that." Uraraka scolded.

{Mei responded by slapping Shinso over the head, "Stop that! Good experiments are uncomfy! You never learn anything interesting just by sitting on your butt! So embrace the awkward!!!"

Izuku laughed, then saw the shocked expression on Shinso's face and laughed even harder, "I didn't know you could give inspirational speeches, Mei-chan!"}

"Well, duh." Mei grins.

{"I'm a woman of many talents." Mei said cryptically. "You'll never discover them all!"

"And on that terrifying note," Shinso drawled, "Do you want to start?"

"Of course!" Izuku responded with a grin. "Do you have the connection now?"

Shinso nodded with a concentrated look on his face but didn't respond. Izuku nodded, it must take a fair amount of focus to keep the connection without completing the brainwash, "Mei, start the timer."

"Already on it, Izu-Kun!" Mei pressed a few buttons on her phone and the experiment officially began. "So... Izu-kun. How are the hero students doing? Any opportunities for me to make super awesome babies?!"}

"Hundreds!" Mei cheers.

{"They're doing well!" Izuku smiled and grabbed one of the many notebooks he'd created for the project. Each student had their own notebook dedicated to their quirks and ideas, and while some were still completely empty, others were already half full. The notebook Izuku happened to grab was for one of the class 1-B students with a really cool copy quirk, "Take this guy, Monoma, for example! He can copy any quirk for five minutes, but I think there might be a way for him to create...well, basically a stockpile

of quirks. If he has to touch a person's whole body, then that won't work, but if it works with any dna…"

"Then he can incorporate different quirks into his costume and always have them on hand when he needs them!" Mei grinned. "I like the way you think, Izu-Kun!'}

"Well that's flattering." Monoma mumbles, a little embarrassed.

"1A isn't as bad as you thought?" Kendo smiles smugly.

"Shut up." Neito pouts.

{Suddenly, Izuku's brain went foggy as the increasingly familiar feeling of Shinso's quirk washed over him. It only lasted a few seconds before Shinso released his control.

"I am so sorry." Shinso was a little out of breath and looked pale and sweaty. "I...I held on for as long as I could, but...why is that so difficult?"

"Because your quirk wants action." Izuku said. "Instinctively, people want to either do something or not. No one *likes* being caught in an in between place. But this is great! You don't have to take control immediately, which gives you a few minutes to disguise your real activation requirements. Mei-chan! How long did he last?"}

"My real requirements?" Shinsou asks.

"You'll see." Izuku insists.

{"Two minutes, eight seconds!" Mei declared. "I'd prefer if it were a little longer, but.."

"But we can train for that." Izuku agreed. "Ideally, we could get him up to five minutes between response and control before the sports festival, but we'll of course have to see how things work and…"

"Wait, back up." Shinso interrupted. "What do you mean by my *real* activation requirements? And shouldn't I be focused on keeping control of people longer or controlling more people or giving more advanced orders or something? What's the point of training to wait before taking control, which isn't easy by the way, when as a hero, I should be trying to resolve situations as

quickly as possible?”}

"Listen to the Problem Child." Aizawa suggests.

{Izuku looked at Mei, who shrugged. He thought they’d explained everything pretty well…

Shinso sighed, “How about you two start again at the beginning, but this time pretend that you’re talking to someone who doesn’t have a single clue you’re trying to say...because I don’t.”}

"I like the kid's sass." Mirko snorted.

{“Oh…” Izuku glanced at Mei again before taking a deep breath to try to organize his thoughts, “Um, ok. So, the main problem with your quirk is that it’s more effective if your opponent doesn’t know what it is, right?”

“That’s the basic idea, yeah.” Shinso rolled his eyes. “But what does that have to do with the time between their response and my control? Because from where I’m sitting, it seemed like a non sequitur.”

“It’s a red herring!” Mei grinned.}

"I see." Cemetoss hums.

{Shinso didn’t look any less confused and raised an eyebrow at Izuku after apparently giving up getting anything close to a normal answer from Mei.

“It’s about distracting whoever you’re fighting with and burying the truth inside a bunch of useless information.” Izuku explained. “For example, sometimes in books, something important will be thrown out, but the readers won’t realize it, because the man with the scar who turns out to be the villain was mentioned right alongside a woman with a large hat who was completely unimportant.”

“If you take control immediately after you get an answer,” Mei flicked Shinso on the forehead, “then it’s like putting a big neon sign above your head explaining how your quirk works.”}

"Obviously." Jiro huffs.

{“Oh thanks.” Shinso said dryly.

"But," Izuku said quickly, "if you wait a few minutes between establishing the connection and giving the order, and use those minutes to do things like, make direct eye contact, establish physical contact, or...I don't know, jump up and down three times while singing nursery rhymes, then…"

"Then no one will know exactly which of those things established the connection." Mei finished.}

"Sounds like fun." Shinsou drawls.

{"I don't sing." Shinso deadpanned, but Izuku could see the faintest trace of a smile in his eyes, and it looked like he finally understood what they were going for. "Ok, so when do I start."

"Well, technically you started today." Izuku said cheekily. "But we'll have a schedule for you by tomorrow if you come by after classes. Do you have anyone at home that you can practice your quirk with?"

Shinso's expression immediately closed off...interesting, "No."}

"More assholes like in Shadows I bet." Mei growls.

{"That's alright!" Izuku said, forcing a layer of cheeriness past his curiosity and, surprisingly, a little bit of anger on Shinso's behalf. "Then you'll just have to practice with us! I don't want you to do any more today, since this exercise is still so new and it's the first time that your brain has had to do it, so we should let it rest, but starting tomorrow, you should start practicing that waiting exercise we just did two or three times a day. For the sports festival, you also need to be able to complete distracting tasks before you officially activate your quirk, so we should focus on getting you to the point where you don't even have to think about it and have full autonomy on when you activate your connection!"}

"You're already designing a training regimen, aren't you?" Shinsou asks.

"Of course." Izuku chirps earning an eye roll.

{Shinso looked a little pale, but Izuku noticed that he also looked determined, just like himself when he used to say he'd be a hero despite his quirklessness. It didn't work out for him, but if he could still help people like Shinso who deserved to be heroes,

then that was more than enough. Shinso would overcome every obstacle put in his path and save so many people and Izuku would have a hand in that! It was almost even better than his own old dream.}

"And now I'm sad again." Kaminari sighed.

{“Perfect!” Mei broke the tension by grabbing Shinso by the arm and dragging him back out into the main lab. "Now that Izu-Kun's had a chance to do his thing, it's my turn! I'm so excited! I have so many awesome babies for you to try!"

"B-babies?!" Shinso looked nervous and a little shocked, but why…? Izuku felt a little bad, but he couldn't help laughing when he realized that he had never actually explained some of Mei's more... exciting eccentricities to Shinso. Oh well, better late than never he supposed.

"She means her inventions!" Izuku managed to gasp between his chuckles. "Mei-chan calls her inventions her babies because she cares about them so much."

"I *made* them, Izu-kun!" Mei cried indignantly. "If you poured your heart and soul into something you'd call them your babies too!"

"I *do* pour my heart and soul into something." Izuku grinned cheekily. "I call them my notebooks."}

Snort
"Hahaha!"
"I mean fair."

{"So... we're just going to be looking at inventions," Shinso confirmed, "not experimenting with human children?"

"The only human children we'll be experimenting on are ourselves!" Mei said gleefully, grabbing a large cardboard box from her workstation. "Extra-Credit-Kun! Grab that box under the table!"

Shinso shrugged and went to pick up the box, only to stumble when the weight was more than he expected. "What's in this thing, rocks!?"}

"Solid metal tools and gear." Mei corrects.

"So basically the same." Shinsou grinned cheekily. Mei back-handed his shoulder with her tongue out at him.

{"Oh hush, it's not that heavy." Mei dismissed. "Izu-kun, grab the other one."

Izuku shrugged and ignored the way that Shinso looked at him knowingly as he tried to pick up the box, only to grunt and fall backward onto his butt, "Mei-chan, seriously?! How strong are you?!"

"It's not my fault you boys are weak." Mei shrugged. "Come on, we need to steal one of the soundproof test rooms."

Izuku stared after her in shock as she walked away and for the first time noticed how much muscle tone she actually had. She'd handled that box like it was nothing, even though both he and Shinso had struggled. He supposed it made sense with how much heavy material she had to work with while inventing, but it was still really impressive...}

"Muscles." Mineta drooled.

"Ew." Mei glanced at the grape in disgust

{"Are you just gonna keep staring at her butt all day," Kohaku asked dryly, looking up from her own invention, "or are you actually gonna help her?"

"I-I, uh," Izuku sputtered and turned bright red, "I wasn't...I didn't…umm…"}

"You're too easy to fluster Midoriya, kero." Tsu teased.

"I know." Izuku whines.

{Deciding that it was best to just cut his losses, Izuku grabbed the box and hefted it as best he could before leaving his snickering classmates behind and following Mei and Shinso. Mei was already taking things out of her box while Shinso was catching his breath and leaning against the wall. Izuku set his box down heavily next to the other two on the table and started shaking out his arms.}

"Mood."
"Been there."
"I can feel the strain just watching."

{“That was…” Shinso looked at Mei, “Is she *actually* human? Or is she just some robot that killed its creator and started updating itself while pretending to be human?”

“Oooh!” Mei grinned. “If I…”

“No, Mei-chan.” Izuku said patiently. “You can’t make yourself into a cyborg.”}

Headcase coughs.

{Mei deflated, then brightened and was about to say something, but Izuku interrupted her before she could say what he *knew* she was going to say, “You can’t make Shinso into a cyborg either.”}

Headcase waves off any concern.

{Mei pouted, “It’d be a great way to get around that stupid one support-item-only rule that the gen-ed students have. And how is he gonna beat the hero course if he can’t even lift a box?”

“Hey!” Shinso straightened up. “I lifted it! I did better than Midoriya anyway.”

“Izu-Kun is an analyst.” Mei-chan said. “He can afford to be a weakling.”}

"Hey!" Izuku pouts. Mei just chuckles at him.

{“Thanks.” Izuku deadpanned, then frowned thoughtfully. “But in all seriousness, it would probably be a good idea for you to take up some sort of physical training, Shinso. Your quirk will probably keep you out of most fights, but there are always times that a hero has to rely on their body more than their quirk. Take Eraserhead, for example! He’s such a great hero because of his martial arts training, not just his ability to cancel quirks!”}

Mic grins at Eraser with a teasing edge. Aizawa glares at him "Not one word."

{“You like Eraserhead?” Shinso asked. “I’ve never met someone else who liked him. Most people I talked to before UA just thought I was making him up.”}

Midnight snickers "Sounds about right."

{“Oh, he’s one of my favorites!” Izuku grinned. “Did you hear he’s

one of the teachers here?! Have you seen him yet?”

“No, I’ve been looking everywhere, hoping to catch a glimpse of him in the halls, but I haven’t had any luck.” Shinso frowned. “I guess he’s just *that* good at stealth, huh?”}

"He *is* UA's resident cryptid." Uraraka chirps.

{“I mean, you kinda have to be to avoid the media as a professional hero.” Izuku said. “What do you think…”

“Experiments now, fanboying later.” Mei said, popping between them with a large metal mask in one hand and three pairs of protective earmuffs in the other. “Put these on!”}

"Oh, right, training." Shinsou chuckles.

{Izuku put one of the earmuffs around his neck as Mei helped Shinso into the mask, “If you want, we could probably use one of the school’s gyms to work out and try to gain some strength before the sports festival.”

Shinso raised an eyebrow at him, “We?”

Izuku shrugged and stretched out his arms, “I sit in front of a screen all day, I’ve been getting sore. Everywhere online says that adding some physical activity to my schedule will help with that. Plus, I can’t just call Mei-chan every time I need to move something heavy.”}

"I'm always happy to help." Mei teases.

"I remind you I can carry All Might without my quirk." Izuku claps back.

{“I’m sure she’d be more than happy to open all the jars for you.” Shinso smirked.

“Nope, too busy!” Mei said. “Now Extra-Credit-Kun, stand on the other side of that plexiglass and yell.”}

"What was that about always being happy to help?" Uraraka elbowed Mei lightly.

"Within reason!" Mei defends.

{Shinso’s eyes widened, “Yell?!”

Mei grinned and nodded, “We need a baseline for volume!”

“Ok…” Shinso walked across the room and waited until both Mei and Izuku had put on their earmuffs before taking a deep breath and yelling as loudly as he could, shaking the room. Mei took a few notes, looking at an instrument in her hands that Izuku had no idea what it was or how to read it, but assumed it told her something about the decibels or volume or whatever.}

"Who would have thought one of the quiet ones could be so loud?" Kaminari chuckles.

"Isn't that, like, common in voice quirks?" Ashido remarks.

"A question for Midoriya." Sero suggests.

"Later." Kirishima hushes them.

{She pulled one side of her earmuffs away from her, prompting Izuku and Shinso to do the same, “Ok, Extra-Credit-Kun, now try to brainwash Izu-Kun!”

Shinso nodded and turned to Izuku, “What’s your favorite food?”

“Katsudon.”}

"It's a toss-up between Mom's and Kacchan's though." Izuku adds.

{Izuku waited for the familiar feeling of Shinso’s quirk to wash over him, but instead, after a few seconds, Shinso just shook his head, “I can’t make the connection. Is this mask electronically transmitting my voice?”

“Yes.” Mei said. “Is that a problem?”

“It must be a problem with quirk transmission.” Izuku said. “Whatever establishes the connection is carried on the voice itself, so having a speaker probably blocks that part. Is that right?”}

"Something we can work around." Mei mumbles.

{When Shinso nodded, Mei took another prototype from one of the boxes and handed it to Shinso, “Ok! Mask baby 2.0! This should magnify your voice without the need for a speaker!”

“And you just have this?” Shinso asked.

“We knew that might be a risk.” Izuku responded. “And Mei enjoyed the challenge.”}

"I always do!" Mei cheers.

{“It’s not as advanced as my other babies.” Mei said. “But for now, it should amplify your voice and I can modify it later to act as a voice changer! Now go yell!”

Shinso walked back behind the plexiglass and screamed, making Izuku wince, even with his earmuffs. Mei wrote something down, then gestured for him to do it again. When he finished, Izuku felt like his ears were still ringing...or wait, was that something else?}

"Oh right, the whole reporter invasion." Jiro rolls her eyes.

{He held up a hand to signal Shinso to stop and took off his earmuffs, “Do you guys hear anything?”

“I'm wearing earmuffs in a soundproof room.” Shinso deadpanned. “The only thing I can hear is my own thoughts.”}

"A dangerous state of being." Tokoyami comments.

"Fumi!" Dark Shadow cries.

{Izuku frowned but listened closer, and, sure enough, he could still hear something coming from outside, “Do you hear that, Mei-chan?”

Mei nodded, “It sounds like alarms.”

The three of them hurried to the door and opened it, only to be blasted with the sound of blaring alarms and flashing lights. The classroom was already empty, and their classmates were nowhere to be found.}

"They left us behind." Mei chuckles.

{“They must have assumed we heard the alarm.” Mei said. “Or they tried knocking on the door and we didn’t hear them.”

“Did we cause the alarm to go off?!” Izuku was panicking. “I didn’t think we were being that loud, but if something went wrong and I mean, sound can cause damage, look at Present Mic! Are we going to get in trouble?! What if they never let us near a test room again? What if they expel…”}

"Woah there." Mic chuckles.

{“They’re not going to be mad at us for setting off an alarm, Izu-Kun!” Mei groaned. “And I don’t think this was us anyway. It would have taken at least twice as much noise to trigger the auditory attack defense system.”

“Should we leave?” Shinso asked. “I don’t want to be here if that’s a fire alarm.”

“But my babies!” Mei said. “I can’t just leave them!”

“Mei…” Whatever Izuku was about to say was cut off by the alarms going silent. “Or not.”

The PA system crackled to life and Nedzu’s cheery voice filtered through the speakers, “Hello students, the threat has been handled! Please calmly return to class!”

“Alright, then!” Mei said, pushing both boys back into the soundproof room. “Back to testing!’

Izuku thought it was odd that there was an alarm in the middle of the day, and what had Nedzu meant by threat? He meant to look into it later, he really did, but then Mei started another round of experiments, and he completely forgot.}

"He's going to regret that." Izuku mentions.

"He'll probably blame himself." Todoroki suggests.

"Another USJ event." Uraraka reminds tensely.

"Let's hope it's better than the last one, kero." Tsu intones.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Kyoka makes a new friend.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Education

{Kyoka double-checked her phone again and sure enough, this seemingly abandoned apartment building was exactly where her maps app was leading her. She huffed in frustrated disappointment. It'd been hard enough to find *anything* on some old hero named *Gran Torino*, and it'd been even harder to find a current address. The internet had been pretty much a total bust and she'd ended up just calling Recovery Girl and asking if she knew anything. That, of course, had led to an awkward conversation about how no, *All Might hadn't told her* and *yes, she was planning on reaching out anyway*, but thankfully instead of being angry at her for eavesdropping, Recovery Girl had just laughed and promised not to give away the surprise. It wasn't supposed to be a surprise, not really, Kyoka just needed some advice beyond 'get stronger and punch things' and was hoping this Gran Torino dude would be able to help.}

"Well, this will be a disaster." Izuku comments.

"Disaster bad or disaster funny?" Jiro asks.

Izuku huffs a laugh "Both."

{Well, the address Recovery Girl had given her was obviously wrong. There was no way that anyone could actually *live* here, but it left a sour taste in her mouth to just turn around and leave

after she'd come all this way. She sighed and trudged up the steps. She'd knock and wait a few minutes, but when nobody answered she was just going home.}

"Yeah, no, that's where he lives." Izuku chuckles.

{Her knocks echoed through the house, but after a moment, Kyoka heard shuffling from inside. There was actually someone in there?! She stuck her hand in her pocket and wrapped it around her pepper spray just to be safe, even though she really shouldn't be as trigger-happy as she was last time, but just in case it wasn't Gran Torino who opened the door. Maybe she should have asked All Might to come with her and introduce them…}

"No, please." All Might whispered.

{The door opened and she had to look down to see the owner of the house because he was so old that he'd shrunk just like Recovery Girl had. He wasn't a lot to look at, just a standard old man with a stubbly beard and a big flannel shirt who probably ate too many tv dinners, but he glared up at her while holding his cane in a way that make it very clear that she was one wrong move away from losing her kneecaps, "Who are you? Are you selling cookies?"}

"She's not wrong about the kneecaps." Gran confirms.

{Kyoka blinked, "What? No!"

"Shame." The man let out a disgruntled noise. "So why are you here then?"

"Well, I'd like to ask you a few questions, actually." Kyoka said. "Assuming you're actually the guy I'm looking for."

"Oh yeah?" He gave her an appraising look. "And who is that?"

"Gran Torino." Kyoka smile when his eyes widened. "That's you, right? Recovery Girl told me I was looking for a crotchety old man."}

"OI!" Gran griped humorously.

"Come now, did you expect me to lie to the dearie?" Chiyo remarks.

{Gran Torino guffawed loudly, "Oh, is that what she told you?

Well, it takes one to know one, that's for sure. And why would you be looking for a *crotchety old man* like me?"

"I was hoping you'd be able to offer some more insight about a secret All Might told me." Kyoka said cryptically. "What do you know about One for All?"}

"A lot more than the big lug apparently!" Gran scoffs.

{Izuku and Hitoshi let the psychological thriller they were watching play in the background as they watched clips of last year's sports festival on Izuku's laptop. They each had notebooks open right next to them with the name of the student they were currently analyzing, which at the moment was a second year named *Tamaki Amajiki.*}

"Oh, no." Amajiki whines.

"I'm sure it won't be too bad!" Hadou cheers.

"You should have more faith in yourself." Mirio comforts.

{"His quirk is so interesting!" Izuku gushed. "Depending on the combination, he could probably imitate almost any quirk….does it work on inorganic materials? Like, if he ate a piece of a balloon, could he float. Actually, that wouldn't really work, but maybe if he inhaled helium…"}

Amajiki buries his head in his hands.

{"I think it's safe to assume that most of what he manifests is actually food." Hitoshi pointed out. "It's weird finding somebody so shy in the hero course though. He'll most likely try to stick to a supporting role, but if we can force him into the spotlight, his anxiety is bound to give us the advantage, especially if we can isolate him from those two other kids he always sits with at the end of his fights. They're his support system, so remove them…"}

"Okay, you *might* have a tough time with them." Hadou concedes.

"But he'll rise to the occasion." Mirio assures.

"Or fail miserably." Tamaki sighs.

{Izuku grinned, "And he just might crumble. Controlling what he eats is a little harder, especially since we obviously don't want to

just starve him or anything, and will only become relevant if it ends up being beneficial to capture him, but...I can do some research into some plants or things that won't give him any useful traits. Maybe corn? It doesn't have vines, so it'll be harder to weaponize."}

"May I say this strategy is rather *brutal*?" Iida remarks.

"Could be worse." Todoroki reminds with the smallest growl to his voice glancing at his *brother*.

{"Getting hit with corn cobs is still gonna hurt." Hitoshi pointed out. "But yeah, not really as scary as a blackberry bush wrapping around you or, like, a bull's horns or something."

"Yeah." Izuku wrote himself a note for later. "I think I've got an ok idea of his quirk now, what about you? Do you have a clear picture of his personality?"

Hitoshi raised an eyebrow, "I've been picking apart people's brains since I was four, Izuku. You have to know what makes a person tick to make them talk."

Izuku grinned and flipped to the next page, "Ok then, who's next? How about...Mirio Togata?"

Hitoshi shrugged, "Sounds good to me."}

"See it's not just you." Mirio cheers.

"Not helping." Amajiki groans.

{Gran Torino grabbed Kyoka by the arm and dragged her inside, slamming the door behind her, "What did you just say?"

He was a lot faster than she was expecting and a lot stronger too. Kyoka winced and rubbed at her arm as soon as he let her go, "I said, I wanted to know more about One for All."

Gran Torino just glared at her suspiciously, "And how do you even know about it."}

"Didn't I already tell him?" Jiro asks quietly.

"The elderly often experience hearing loss." Yaomomo whispers back.

{“All Might told me.” Kyoka steadily returned his glare. “He said he wants me to inherit it, but at the same time, I know there’s something he’s not telling me. If I’m going to let somebody else give me a quirk, I’d like to know what I’m getting into.”}

"Smart." Izuku chirps with an obviously false smile.

{Gran Torino frowned and pulled out his phone, but he was no longer staring daggers at her, so that was an improvement. He still gave her a suspicious glance as he held the phone up to his ear, though.

Kyoka’s eyes widened when All Might answered the phone, “G-gran Torino? What…to what do I owe the pleasure? I, um, I wasn’t expecting a call from you today.”}

"You can hear the *fear*." Kaminari shivers.

{“I have a girl here who says she's your successor.” Gran Torino said. “Purple hair, more attitude than Nana had at your age, sound familiar? If she’s your successor, why the hell aren’t you here with her?!”

Jiro heard a hacking cough on the other end of the phone and grimaced as she realized All Might was spitting up blood again. That was her bad, “Uh, I didn’t actually tell him I was coming. I overheard him talking about you with some guy named Tsukauchi and just thought you might be able to help me.”

Gran Torino blinked at her for a moment as All Might spluttered excuses before he took a deep breath and yelled into the phone, “That’s even worse, you nincompoop! Were you really so sparse on the details that this girl had to go out of her way to find somebody to give her some answers? You know what? She seems like a nice girl and I’m glad you found somebody with a lick of sense at least, so I’ll help you out and answer her questions, ok? But you owe me a full box of taiyaki, got it?}

"You still owe me two." Gran reminds.

"Of course." All Might quickly agrees.

{“Y-yes sir.” All Might spluttered. “Of course! Thank you!”

Gran Torino hung up the phone as Jiro looked at him in shock, “Alright kid, now what’s your name?”

“Uh…Kyoka Jiro.” Kyoka said. “Sir?”

Gran Torino just rolled his eyes, “Just call me Gran. All Might only bothers with that *sir* stuff because I had to beat some sense into him when he was younger. Now what all did that All American Peacock tell you about One for All?”}

"All American Peacock!!?" Ashido cackled. Various types of laughter fill the room as Gran grins proudly.

{“Well, he told me that it’s a quirk that gets passed down and that it’ll make me stronger.” Jiro started. “But it’s not really the quirk itself that I have questions about, my problem is more, like, about the training? All Might told me that if I don’t have enough muscle mass when I accept it, it’ll blow my arms off, which we obviously don’t want to have happen, right? But, like, I get that it’s a lot of power, but muscle mass can’t be the only way to harness it. Muscle takes a lot of time to build and showing up to the entrance exam with a new quirk that I’ve never used before just sounds like a recipe for disaster to me.”}

"It is." Izuku confirms with feeling.

{Gran stared at her with an unreadable expression for a long moment before pulling out his phone again, “You told her she couldn’t receive it until when?!”}

"You're lucky that kid is resilient." Gran growls at Yagi.

"Yes I'm realizing that." All Might defends with his hands up in defeat.

"At least the man is learning." Recovery Girl mentions.

"And it seems like he'll have plenty of time to learn more." Nedzu chuckles. "Now settle down it's starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP... Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Katsuki Bakugo/Consequences

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

You Reap What You Sow

{When Izuku woke up in Recovery Girl's office, Aizawa was standing over him with an expression that was an odd mix of relieved, afraid, and absolutely pissed, "Give me one good reason why I shouldn't expel him right now."}

"This should be good." Aizawa groans.

{Izuku bit his lip. This was what he was worried about since he'd learned that Aizawa had expelled an entire class of first-year students for being just like Katsuki, but he just *couldn't* expel him. His entire life, there were only two things that Izuku had known with absolute certainty and those were that all men were not created equal and that Katsuki Bakugo would be an amazing hero. Izuku just *couldn't* bring himself to be the reason that one of those truths came crashing down around his ears. He opened his mouth to say so, taking a deep breath before closing it again.}

"Think this through Problem Child." Aizawa insists.

{Would Katsuki be an amazing hero? Truly? Izuku paused, remembering all the times Katsuki had *put him in his place* simply because he had been born weaker. Was that someone who would be able to protect the weak, like a hero was supposed to do? Or was that someone who just wanted a license to beat people up? What about all the teachers who had just watched, praising

Katsuki's quirk and pushing all the blame on Izuku for *causing trouble*? What had they done to make sure Katsuki would be a great hero, besides assuring him that he was better than everyone else? Wasn't it *their* responsibility to guide him, not Izuku's?}

"Indeed." Nedzu admits.

{"Because it's not his fault."

Aizawa let out an angry exhale, running his fingers through his hair, "It's not yours either, problem child."

Izuku looked up at him, "I know."}

"Progress!"
"He's learning!"

{That threw Aizawa for a loop. He looked at Izuku with wide eyes for a long moment before sitting next to him on the bed, "Then why, after everything he's done to you, why does he deserve a place at UA?"

Izuku took a deep breath, speaking slowly as he tried to untangle what he was thinking, "It's not his fault that he is the way he is. Did you know that the teachers knew he was beating me up? They never told anyone, especially my mom, even though everyone knew. Katsuki still has a spotless record because it was easier to blame me and they didn't want to ruin their chances of being associated with such an amazing hero. No one has ever told him that what he's doing is wrong. They've taught him that it's his right as the strongest to prey on the weak and that there are people in this world that no one should care about." Izuku looked at Aizawa. "You shouldn't expel him because he's never truly had the chance to succeed. He's still young and it's not too late. If someone tries...maybe Katsuki can still be a great hero."}

"Wow." Kaminari whispers.

"He isn't doing it alone either." Ashido grins practically body-slamming Bakugo.

"Oi, get off me!" Bakugo barks at her.

"Just accept it." Sero smiles broadly.

"We're with you, bro." Kirishima chuckles.

Bakugo just groans.

{Aizawa scowled and clenched his fists a few times, “Fine,” he said, “But I’m making him go to mandatory anger management therapy.”

He stood and headed toward the door to talk to Nedzu, but Izuku grabbed his hand, “Eraser…” He looked up at Aizawa with a small smile, “Thank you.”

Aizawa rolled his eyes and ruffled Izuku’s hair, “Whatever, problem child.”}

"Aw, how soft~" Midnight teased.

"Shut up." Aizawa scowled.

{He had his hand on the door when Izuku realized one last thing, “Eraser wait!”

Aizawa looked at him with one eyebrow raised.

“Don’t tell him that I didn’t want him to be expelled….” he frowned, “it won’t go over well.”

Aizawa nodded and opened the door, heading down the hall. Izuku sighed and ran his fingers through his hair again.

Hopefully he’d made the right decision.}

"Only time will tell." Shoji sighs.

{“Bakugo, would you and your parents follow me, please?”

Aizawa led the three into Nedzu’s office where the principal was already waiting. He’d already talked to him about what Deku had said and they’d come up with a plan. As Deku’s friend, Aizawa would really rather expel the brat, but as a teacher, he had to admit it made a grudging sort of sense. It wouldn’t be rational to expel Bakugo when this kind of behavior had been ignored and even encouraged in the past if Deku was to be believed.}

"We are teachers." Mic comforts.

{If the brat messed up, however, he'd kick him to the curb.}

"Merciless." Shigaraki smirks.

{Bakugo glared at everything in the office as if it had personally offended him, which maybe, from his perspective, it had. He certainly seemed to think that Deku was trying to offend him, even when the kid had done nothing wrong. His mother was just as loud as he was, just less angry, while Aizawa would almost forget his father was there if he didn't physically take up space. It was definitely an interesting family dynamic and it made Aizawa wonder if the schools were entirely responsible for what Bakugo had become.}

"Again depends on the world." Headcase comments.

{He stood silently in the corner watching as Nedzu smiled pleasantly at the family, "Thank you so much for coming in. We apologize again for pulling you away from work, but this issue is better addressed immediately."

Mitsuki nodded, "It's alright, principal, sir. What's this about, anyway? You were kinda vague on the phone."

Nedzu clapped his hands together, "Well, it seems as though some rather troubling patterns in your son's behavior have come to light and we would like to discuss how these will be addressed moving forward."

"What kind of patterns?" Mitsuki looked at the principal suspiciously, but it was Aizawa that answered.

"His behavior is excessively aggressive and even violent."

"Oh, that's just Katsuki!" Mitsuki smiled. "He's an explosive boy, comes with his quirk."}

"That is not a good excuse." Hound Dog growls.

{Aizawa scowled, he saw what Deku meant when he said it was the adult's fault Bakugo's behavior hadn't been checked, "In a battle exercise earlier today, your son knowingly used an attack that could have killed or seriously injured his opponent. It is only due to that student's training and quick reflexes that he was able to dodge." Bakugo scoffed and Aizawa glared at him. "It has also come to our attention that he has a history of assaulting that same student in the past."}

Bakugo flinched at the word 'assault', Kirishima noticed and tightened his grip on his shoulder briefly.

{“Deku lies.” Bakugo practically spat the words and it was all Aizawa could do not to strangle him right then.

Nedzu raised an eyebrow at Bakugo, “That may have been what your teachers have chosen to believe in the past, but let us assure you that we will not be guilty of their same failures.”}

"Good." Bakugo huffs.

{“What does this have to do with Izuku?” Mitsuki asked. “What about the other student in the exercise?”

“Izuku Midoriya *was* the other student in the exercise.” Nedzu said cheerfully. “He was admitted to the hero course on recommendations. I met him before the school year and suspected that he had problems with bullying, which was only confirmed by your son’s behavior. Were you aware, Bakugo, that such behavior could prevent you from becoming a hero?”}

"If someone reports it." Dabi growls bitterly.

{Bakugo’s eyes widened in shock and Mitsuki practically started vibrating in rage, “You can’t keep Katsuki from being a hero! He’s perfect for hero work and he’s been working so hard! It’s been his dream since he was a kid!”

Aizawa wanted to scream about how her son tried to crush Deku’s dream for a decade, and what was she doing then? Masaru looked like he was trying to become one with the chair as his wife stood and leaned over Nedzu’s desk, veins clearly visible on her forehead.

Nedzu just held up his hands placatingly, “We are not planning on expelling your son. At least, not today. If you will please return to your seat, we will discuss our next course of action.”}

"Nedzu is so smooth and calm, it's impressionnant, no?" Aoyama mentions.

"Yes?" Koda agrees.

{Mitsuki sat back down but didn’t stop glaring at Nedzu, who was still smiling.

“Perfect! Now, as we said before, these patterns are very concerning and will not be allowed to continue. If young Bakugo wishes to remain enrolled here at UA, he will be required to attend anger management therapy with Hound Dog, our school counselor, twice weekly during his free period.”

Bakugo's jaw dropped, “What?! Why the fuck should I have to talk to some stupid shrink? I’m not fucking crazy!”}

"That's... not the only reason to go to therapy." Kirishima says with concern.

"Yeah, and like, with how traumatic and stressful hero work is we'll all have to go eventually." Ashido agrees.

"These are the facts of life." Kaminari nods.

"Dude." Sero deadpans.

{“Changes need to be made, Bakugo.” Nedzu said calmly. “And therapy will be the most effective way of assisting you to make those changes as well as monitoring your progress.”

“I’m not going to fucking therapy!” Bakugo slammed his smoking hands on Nedzu’s desk.

“Then you’ll be expelled and may face criminal assault charges.” Aizawa said simply. “Same goes for if you attend therapy but don’t make any progress. We don’t need heroes running around who are going to abuse their power.”}

Not-so-subtle glances at Endeavor have the man crossing his arms.

{Bakugo scowled, hands smoking, but sat down. Mitsuki cuffed him upside the head, “Come one, brat, it’s your own fault, apparently.”

“I’m sure it won’t be that bad, Katsuki.” Masaru said softly.

Bakugo just scoffed, “We done here, or what?”

“You just need to sign this stating that you understand the conditions of your continued enrollment and that you agree to them and then you’ll be free to go!” Nedzu said cheerfully.

The family left as soon as the paperwork was done and Aizawa groaned as soon as the door closed, “Is it wrong that I want him

to mess up so I can expel him?”

Nezu hummed and sipped his tea, “His behavior up until now has been cruel, but I believe Deku was right in saying that no one has tried to correct his behavior before. He might have genuinely thought he was in the right, or might simply have not known how to change.” He set down his cup and sighed, “I just hope we’re not too late.”}

"Redemption!" Ashido and Kaminari cheer.

"That's two down the redemption route!" Kirishima joins.

"Shame it's a *forced* redemption." Sero sighs.

"Whatever." Bakugo grumbles. "Just quiet down the next one is starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Shouto wakes up in the league of villains hideout.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

To Be a Hero

{Shouto woke up dazed and disoriented. By the time he was aware enough to look around the room, he'd been tied to a chair with quirk suppressant cuffs. A man with painful-looking scars sat in a chair across from him, but from what Shouto could see, they were the only two in the room.}

"Here we go." Dabi sighs.

{"Hey Shouto," the man said softly, "It's good to see you."

Shouto frowned slightly, he didn't understand why a villain, even one who just kidnapped him, was happy to see him, "Who are you?"

The man smiled slightly, "I go by Dabi, but I think you can guess that's not my real name." He leaned forward, "We actually knew each other once, back before I got these scars."}

"Is he really making me figure this out myself?" Todoroki growls.

"Would you believe him if he just came out and said it?" Izuku asked in a calm voice. Todoroki huffed but agreed anyway.

{"Am I just supposed to know who you are?"

Dabi shrugged, "It's not like you knew a whole lot of people back

then. That flaming bastard kept you isolated so no one could *distract* you from your training."}

Endeavour chose not to react to the glares thrown his way.

{That made Shouto pause. He'd never heard anyone else talk about Endeavor that way, with the same intense hatred he himself felt. Against his better judgment, he found himself actually *liking* the villain that had kidnapped him. But how did he know about Shouto's isolation?

"My hair was red then, too, kinda like yours." Dabi continued, producing a brilliant blue flame and watching it flicker with brilliant teal eyes.

Shouto wracked his brain, trying to think of who this guy could be. Red hair, like his left side...strong flame quirk, like his left side...teal eyes, like...Shouto's eyes widened.

"Touya?"

The man smiled, "Hey there, little brother."}

"You're switching scenes *now*!?" Ashido cried.

"Hush we might come back to it!" Kaminari insisted.

{Aizawa rested his head in his hands as he sat in the interrogation room waiting for Tsukauchi. Dozens of students were hurt by the gas or the other villains, another in critical condition from a classmate's rampaging quirk, an abducted pro hero, a kidnapped student, and a dead child. The three measly villains they'd managed to capture were nothing in comparison to the unmitigated horror that the training camp had been.}

"Dark Shadow." Tokoyami tried to comfort his whimpering counterpart.

Meanwhile...

"Kota really died." Izuku sniffled as his friend surrounded him in a hug.

{Aizawa looked up when he heard the door open. Tsukauchi looked at him sympathetically and set a cup of coffee down in front of him, "How are you holding up?"

“I couldn’t save him,” Aizawa said, “I knew they’d taken him and I got so *close*, but at the last minute, I was too weak.” He looked at the detective, “What kind of a teacher lets his student be kidnapped?”}

"No, sensei!"
"You did what you could!"
"Don't blame yourself!"

{Tsukauchi sighed, “We’re dealing with elite villains the likes of which we haven’t seen since before All Might’s debut. The blame for this incident is theirs and theirs alone. This was the same group that managed to kill the symbol of peace, so don’t blame yourself that you couldn’t take them all out. That being said, we do need your statement of the incident. Maybe it can help us find Todoroki in time.”}

"Truth!"
"Listen to him!"
”Hurry!"

{“Do you know why he was taken?” Aizawa asked.

Tsukauchi shook his head, “We were hoping you knew. The best we can come up with is that he was probably abducted to use as leverage against Endeavor. These villains are targeting hero society itself, so it’d be in line with their goals.”}

"Not quite." Todoroki deadpans.

{Aizawa nodded, “The first I knew of the attack was when Mandalay sent out the message. I left Vlad King with the other students and left to go fight. As soon as I left the main building, I was confronted by a flame user who implied that they were after the students. I tried to interrogate him, but he dissolved into goo before I could get any information out of him.”

“Goo?” Tsukauchi questioned, “I thought you said he had a fire quirk?”}

"That's my jam!""**My bad!**"

{“He did,” Aizawa sighed, “I think the goo was some kind of cloning quirk belonging to another villain.”

Tsukauchi nodded, “What happened next?”

“I took out Muscular as he tried to chase one of my students. I then went into the forest, sending any students I came across back to camp. I had just saved Ururaka and Asui when Bakugo found me and told me Todoroki had been kidnapped by a villain in a yellow coat that compressed him into a marble. I searched and found the flame villain I’d fought earlier talking to someone else. I followed them until I saw the villain that had taken Todoroki, then canceled his quirk, which temporarily freed Todoroki.” He grits his teeth, “Then everything went to shit. The fire user used his flames to block my field of vision. I couldn’t see him to cancel his quirk and I couldn’t see any of the other villains either. By the time the flames disappeared, they were gone, taking Todoroki with them.”

“What did the villains look like? Can you give me any physical characteristics?”

Aizawa nodded.

“Let’s start with the fire user,” Tsukauchi said, “What did he look like?”

“Tall, black hair, teal eyes. His skin was pale, but his neck and arms as well as part of his face were covered in large burn scars that appeared to be stitched together with his normal skin.”

Tsukauchi paused in his notetaking, “You said he was held together by stitches?”

As soon as Aizawa said yes, Tsukauchi stood and opened the door, “Sansa, bring me the reports on the canvassing operation!”

“What’s wrong?” Aizawa asked.

“Nothing,” Tsukauchi smiled, “But we might have a location on the League of Villains.”}

"You're how they found us Patchwork!" Shigaraki griped.

"We escaped didn't we?" Dabi snapped.

"Guys, can we not?" "**Fight, fight, fight.**"

{“Father told us you died.”

Dabi scoffed and rolled his eyes, “Yeah, cause after all the shit

that guy's done, he'll *definitely* draw the line at lying."}

"Doesn't change the fact that we *mourned* him." Todoroki growls.

{Shouto frowned. It made sense, a little too much sense actually, but he still wasn't sure Dabi was telling the truth, "If you're really my brother," he said suspiciously, "what did we do on weekends when Endeavor would meet with the hero commission?"

Dabi's eyes lit up, "Mom would gather us all in the front room with all the pillows and blankets in the house. Then she and Fuyumi would make hot chocolate for all of us and we'd watch a movie. Then we'd make a game of cleaning up so there was no trace of what had happened by the time Father came home." He frowned, "We stopped that tradition when Endeavor locked Mom away."}

"That's such a sweet tradition." Midnight coos.

"It's a shame it had to be hidden." Mic sighs.

"And stopped." Aizawa agreed.

{Shouto stared. None of them had ever told anyone about that tradition so that Endeavor would never find out. There was no way he could have known about it, much less spoken about it with so much happiness unless he really was Touya.

"I also remember that Mom would ice your bruises and burns after Endeavor's *training,* " He spits out bitterly, "After she was gone, Fuyumi took over that job," Dabi met Shouto's eyes, "They did the same thing for me when I was subjected to the bastard's training before you got your quirk."}

Todoroki straightens "Wha.."

{"You went through it too?" Shouto breathed out. Dabi nodded, "It was hell. He'd make me work past my body's limits, producing fire for hours even though it hurt. He'd kick me when I was down, then blame me for being *weak* when I couldn't stand up again. He'd constantly remind me that I wasn't good enough, even though I was the best shot he had at beating All Might at the time." He scowled. "And when you finally got your quirk, he tossed me aside as just another failure, forgetting all the abuse he'd put me through in favor of abusing you."}

"I get it." Todoroki said sadly "I don't like it but I get it."

{“I’m sorry.” Shouto said, “I’m sorry he forgot about you.”

Dabi shrugged, “It wasn’t your fault. I’m sorry you got the perfect quirk and had to go through that hell disguised as training longer than I ever did.” He chuckled. “Even back when I was living at home, I’d fantasize about what I’d do to the bastard if I ever got the chance. How I’d kill him when I got strong enough, even as he was pounding me into the floor. I hated him even then.” He looked at Shouto. “You hate him too, don’t you?”}

"I don't know." Todoroki whispers.

"And that's okay, you don't have to know." Izuku says firmly offering comfort to his friend.

{Shouto swallowed, but nodded. Absently, he knew that as Endeavor’s masterpiece, he shouldn’t be bonding with a villain, but Dabi was his *brother*, his brother who *understood*. His brother, who had the same burning hatred as he did for their father. Even Natsuo and Fuyumi couldn’t understand, not in the same way.

“That’s why you don’t use your fire isn’t it?” Dabi asked. “Because you hate him.”

Shouto nodded, “It’s *his* quirk. I don’t need his power, just like I don’t need him.”}

"It's not *his*, it's *mine*." Todoroki reminds himself.

{Dabi shook his head, “There’s a better option here.”

Shouto tilted his head in a silent question and Dabi continued, “Endeavor gave you that fire so you’d become a hero. So what if you were to use that fire for something that dear old Dad would *hate*.”

Shouto started, remembering Midoriya’s words back at the sports festival, *you could always use it to do things your father would hate.*

“How would you like to use your fire to show Dad how wrong he was? How would you like to use it to show him how much you hate him?”}

"Yeah little brother how bout it?" Dabi starts to smile.

{Shouto thought for a minute. He was supposed to be a hero, that was what he'd been raised to do, but the idea of showing his father how much he'd hurt him was tempting. Father was the one that was always pushing Shouto to become a hero, but had he ever really wanted that?}

"I did, and I do again, now." Todoroki answered.

{Maybe he had once, back when he was a little kid, back before his mother had been forced away from him, but that small desire had been burned and kicked out of Shouto by a decade of abuse. The only reason he was even at UA was because of what his father wanted.

But what did Shouto want?

He clenched his fists as the hate burning in his heart grew even hotter. He wanted to show the world what kind of a person Endeavor really was and hurt him like he'd hurt Shouto. He wanted to hurt everyone who thought that heroes were perfect and would always save the day. He wanted to prove to them that heroes weren't gods. He wanted to hurt all the heroes who must have known what was going on, but who never once came to save him. He looked at his brother with fire in his eyes.

"So Shouto," Dabi asked, "how would you like to be a villain?"}

"I have a feeling he's going to say yes." Shinsou sighed.

"So do I." Todoroki agreed.

"How you feeling Todoroki?" Izuku asks.

Todoroki takes a moment to answer. "Conflicted?' I'm still sad and angry that my brother left. I'm upset he left me behind. I want my brother back but he's done so much against us... I don't think I'll ever forgive him."

"Nor do you need to." Iida informed. "You can attempt a future relationship with your brother with the understanding that there are things he will never be forgiven for."

"Totally, like with Deku and Bakugo, I know they said the ones on screen were worse, but there's probably *something* even the ever-patient and tolerant Deku won't forgive."

"She's right, I'm not telling you what, but she's right."

"Forgiveness is the choice of the wronged and no one else, kero"

"Thank you." Todoroki sighs with relief.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:TGG Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Katsuki begins volunteering with the villain rehabilitation program.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian The Green Guide

Responsibilities

{Deku wasn't coming back.

That was what their shitty-ass villain of a teacher had announced at the beginning of homeroom. He said that Deku had decided to transfer schools, and Katsuki could only hope that was really what happened instead of it being a cover story for if Izuku had really…

Katsuki shook his head and forced himself to keep walking toward the community center. If Deku had killed himself, his old hag would have told him. She and Auntie Inko had always been close, so if Deku was dead, he'd be one of the first to know. He had to be alive. Katsuki didn't know what he'd do if that damn nerd had really followed his messed up *advice*.}

"Would I?" Bakugo asks strangely subdued "Would I have been told?"

The crowd holds their breath as Headcase dims a pained look on her face "It..." she pauses wishing she had something better to say.

Izuku interrupts "It depends on the world." The resignation in his voice is *oh so telling*.

A spark of anger enters the light beings face, her glow almost pitch-black "Yes, and it's rarely handled as it should." She takes a breath to

calm herself "But in the vast majority of worlds such an *event* motivates you to be *better*."

A moment passes with the audience calming themselves before returning to the screen.

{The rehabilitation group met in one of the larger rooms of the community center. Amplifier was already setting up chairs in a big circle when he arrived. She looked up when she heard the door open and smiled as brightly as Deku did. Katsuki scowled, the last thing he needed today was more reminders of the damn nerd.

“Hey Bakugo!” She yelled cheerfully. “Right on time. Can you finish setting up these chairs while I grab some water?”

Katsuki didn’t bother responding, figuring that the way he moved to grab a few of the chairs stacked against the wall was answer enough. Amplifier seemed to agree, given that she immediately left the room and let him do his thing. He didn’t know exactly how many chairs to set up, but the group couldn’t be that big, so after there were about twenty chairs out, he leaned against the wall and crossed his arms to wait.}

"That's a pretty good estimation." Amplifier agrees.

{Amplifier came back a few minutes later carrying a large water jug that she set on the table next to him, “Alright, that’s about it. Pretty low maintenance setup, don’t you think?”

Katsuki didn’t really know what to say to that, so he just nodded. The villain extras were starting to filter in, so Amplifier left to go chat with them while Katsuki pretended to stare at the floor, even though he was really just observing the people he’d supposedly volunteered to help or something like that. He had a feeling Amplifier knew what he was doing, but he didn’t really care what that bitch thought.}

"You did this to yourself." Dabi snarked.

"We all know what it's like to force ourselves to do something we *need* to, even if we don't *want* to." Shigaraki says calmly.

"When did you get reasonable?" Dabi sighs.

"When I realized *all* our tragic backstories will probably be on display

so taking digs at yours when you're obviously upset by it might be a bad idea." Shigaraki says plainly.

"Thanks." Dabi mumbles quietly.

{The people coming into the room didn't match what Katsuki had always been taught about villains, so that was just one more way his teachers had failed at their jobs, he guessed. Aside from the little tracking bracelets around their ankles, the villains looked relatively normal, nothing like the incarnations of evil that the news made them out to be. But maybe it was just because these were nobodies, not ranked villains. Or maybe they were just good at hiding who they really were, who knew?}

"Or maybe we're just human." Twice whined "**Yeah!**"

{One of them, some guy with weird little tentacles instead of hair, caught his eye and smiled at him, but Katsuki simply scowled and turned away. He wasn't here to make friends with this scum, he was here to learn how not to be so scummy himself. Besides, Villains weren't good people. They couldn't be nice.}

"Isn't that one of the Trigger villains Viridian faced?" Todoroki asks.

"I think so." Izuku agrees.

{Right?

It only took a few minutes before everyone was there and most of the seats were filled. Amplifier smiled and skipped to the front of the room, "Hello everyone, welcome back!"

"Who's the kid?" Some big guy with horns and green skin said gruffly.

Amplifier grinned, "Oh, this is Bakugo! He's gonna be helping me out for the next little while."

There was a round of nods and welcomes from the villains, which Katsuki mostly ignored.}

"On brand." Kaminari comments.

{"Why'd you decide to volunteer to help a bunch of villains?" A weird girl with pigtails asked loudly.

Katsuki made a face that would normally send Deku running as

he stared her down, “None of your fucking business!”

There was a long moment of silence before the group erupted into laughter. The weird girl grinned, “Oh, I *like* him!”}

Ashido tries not to laugh "They just don't give a shit."

{“Yeah,” the big-horned villain slapped his knee, “he’s gonna fit in just fine!”

Katsuki stared at them like they’d gone crazy, then glanced at Amplifier, who was smiling at him like he’d done something great, which was what pushed him over the edge, “Shut up! I don’t need your shitty approval!”}

"Too bad!" Amplifier laughs.

{“Where’d you find this kid?” One of the other villains asked. “He’s great!”

Amplifier’s grin got bigger, “He came to me. Don’t worry, you’re gonna have plenty of time to get to know him, but let’s get started. Anybody want to share how their week went?”

The cheerful mood dropped like a rock and the assorted villains became very busy looking at the floor. Katsuki frowned. If it was just one or two that had a bad week, he’d get it, but all of them? Had there been something specific that happened, or…?}

"It's just like that sometimes." Toga chirped with a noticeable strain to her smile, not that anyone pointed that out.

{The big-horned villain finally spoke up, “My girlfriend’s family came to visit for the first time since we started dating. They’re from a little town and I guess Hina didn’t tell them about my quirk because they...well, they’re the type of people that don’t like mutant types. It’s one thing getting called Frankenstein by little kids, they don’t mean anything by it, they just think it’s cool I’ve got green skin, but when adults say it, it’s malicious. I managed to keep things civil until they left, but their stupid passive-aggressive comments really made me want to shoot someone.”}

"Mood." Shoji whispered. Tokoyami nodded and Koda padded him on the back with a sigh.

{Amplifier nodded in understanding, “That must have been hard, facing discrimination from people who you were probably hoping would like you. I’m proud of you for holding out, though, and I hope things get better.”

“Fat chance.” Someone muttered. Katsuki frowned. Was...was discrimination really that big of an issue?}

"**Yes!**"

{“I’ll go next.” The tentacle-haired villain offered. “My mom was trying to get on my case about finding a job, even though I’ve told her there’s no point. No one will hire me until I complete this rehabilitation course and get my arrest record wiped, but she doesn’t seem to understand that. Normally, I’d just go out with friends and ignore her, but my old friends are part of why I’m in this mess in the first place, so…”}

"What are you writing?" Sero asks Ashido.

"We should sponsor a Villain rehabilitation program like Amplifier. I'm hoping Nedzu will help us, but if not, we'll have to do it ourselves." She smiles as she writes out her idea.

{“That sucks man,” Weird Pigtails said, “I’m kinda in the same boat. If I really want to become an *upstanding citizen*,” her tone was met with a round of laughs, “I have to find entirely new friends. It doesn’t seem worth it sometimes.”

Katsuki’s frown deepened as the villains kept sharing their stories. If they weren’t facing obstacles because of their villain status, it was because of their quirks or their gender. It was just so foreign to him. Was this what other people experienced? Katsuki hadn’t ever had anyone judge him like that. Sometimes they thought it was weird that he was so angry, but as soon as they learned what his quirk was, they just wrote it off. It just seemed wrong that their experiences were so different.}

"It is." Aizawa grumbles.

{After everyone who wanted to have had a chance to share, Amplifier began talking about what the villain extras were supposed to be learning about this week, “Today we’re going to be learning to accept responsibility for our actions. There will always be circumstances beyond our control, but it’s helpful to realize that not everything is someone else’s fault.”

“Yeah,” Tentacles grinned, “Everything happens for a reason, and sometimes that reason is that you’re an idiot.”}

Snort
"Hahahaha!"
"True."
"I mean, yeah."
"Obviously."

{That drew a laugh from everyone and even Katsuki found himself chuckling.

“Pretty much!” Amplifier said cheerfully. “But, really, recognizing that sometimes things are your own fault goes hand in hand with realizing that you can become better. This isn’t about beating yourself up, it’s about realizing that if you broke it, you can fix it.”

Katsuki thought about that. His teachers definitely hadn’t done him any favors in teaching him the right way to act, but they hadn’t told him to beat Deku up. They hadn’t done anything to stop it, but ultimately, it was his own decision to bully Deku and the other weak-ass extras. Katsuki swallowed the...was it guilt? Was that what he was feeling? But Amplifier said he wasn’t supposed to beat himself up, however tempting that seemed right then, so what now?}

"Patience." Amplifier comments.

"He's not very good at that." Aizawa mentions.

"Yet." She insists.

{He couldn’t fix it. At least, he didn’t feel like he could. He couldn’t go back in time and be less of a jerk. He couldn’t erase the fact that he’d told Deku to jump off a roof. None of that was ever going to go away, no matter how much he changed. Was there even a point to this, or was he just going to be a bully and a villain forever?}

"Nope." Hagakure cheers.

{Eventually, the class ended and everyone got up to get water and socialize before heading home. Katsuki was so lost in his own guilt that he almost didn’t realize that the tentacle-haired guy had come to lean against the wall right next to him.

“Hey, dude. I’m Aito Ogawa, nice to meet you.”

Katsuki simply scoffed and tried to ignore him, but the guy wouldn’t take a hint.}

"Remind you of anyone." Bakugo smirked.

"C'mon dude, you know you love us." Kaminari grins, earning a scoff to echo the one on screen.

{“It’s pretty cool how you’re volunteering and stuff.” Ogawa said. “And I’m glad I’m not the new guy here anymore.”

Katsuki couldn’t help wondering how a nice guy like this became a villain when an asshole like him was on track to become a hero. Maybe he was just really petty and manipulative or something like that…

“If you’ve got something to ask, just ask it.” Ogawa grinned. “Don’t be shy.”

“I’m not fucking shy!” Katsuki growled. “I was just wondering what the fuck you did you get arrested. You don’t seem like the type.”}

"Some never do." Midnight sighed.

{Ogawa chuckled, “Thanks for the compliment...I think?” He looked out at the room and sighed. “My sister started running with the wrong crowd a few years ago, and I always thought her friends were so cool, so I started hanging out with people like them. I got arrested a few weeks ago for going on a rampage with a few others after we got dosed with an experimental version of Trigger. It wasn’t our fault, so normally it wouldn’t have put me on probation or anything, but,” he grimaced, “I happened to have an outstanding warrant for shoplifting when they took me in.”}

"So he *is* the villain Viridian faced." Todoroki confirmed.

{Katsuki scoffed, “Everything happens for a reason, huh?”

Ogawa smiled sheepishly, “Yeah, and I’m an idiot. I’m just lucky this program exists, 'cause otherwise, I’d be screwed.”

“They’ll really wipe your arrest record if you come to this?” Katsuki asked.

He nodded, “I think it’s supposed to be a way to limit the number of villains. If they try to rehabilitate those of us who aren’t too far gone, then it frees up the heroes to go after the real bad guys, right?”}

"Makes sense." Ojirou comments.

{Katsuki shrugged. It made a certain type of sense.

“Well, Bakugo, it was nice meeting you, whatever your reasons are for being here.” Ogawa smiled and waved as he pushed himself away from the wall. “See you next week!”

Katsuki grunted and watched him leave. He had a lot to think about.}

"He's going to do great!" Amplifier cheers.

"It's nice to see progress from one of him at least." Mr. Brave comments.

"Deku's version might go down that route." Rock Lock mentions.

"I'm not sure how to feel about that." Ms. Joke frowns.

"It's going to take time anyway." Kamui Woods remarks.

"We'll have to wait and see." Mt. Lady sighs.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Izuku notices something odd on the cameras as he watches class 1A.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Anomalies

{Izuku sharpened his pencils and separated the notebooks he'd dedicated to class 1A. He didn't really think he'd learn anything new about their quirks today since they were just doing a special rescue lesson, but it *would* be interesting to see how they applied their quirks in a non-combat-oriented situation. He was particularly excited to see how Katsuki reacted to being confronted with a problem that he couldn't punch.}

"Wow you jumped on the petty train real quick." Shinsou chuckled

"I'm very adaptable." Izuku nods with false innocence.

{Izuku glanced at the clock. The class would be arriving in just a few minutes, assuming that no one had any issues getting into their costumes or anything, so he went ahead and opened up the camera feeds to get a visual of Thirteen already waiting inside. Their quirk was so amazing! Izuku made a mental note that he needed to get their autograph sometime, maybe after the sports festival?}

"Anytime." Thirteen giggles.

{Since the students hadn't arrived yet, Izuku figured he might as well use the time to familiarize himself with the facility. It was so

cool! All sorts of different terrain simulated different disasters that the students would have to deal with as pro heroes, and from his place inside the system, Izuku could easily see all the different controls for each of the zones. At any point, Thirteen, Nedzu, or whoever was teaching could easily turn off any of the disaster zones if anything went wrong, or even turn them up or control them almost like a video game to offer their students more of a challenge. They'd all been set to the lowest *automatic disaster* setting for the first years, obviously, but Izuku knew he'd be asking Nedzu if he could observe one of the third year's ' rescue exercises so he could see the building's full potential. It was so cool!}

"Yeah!" Hadou cheered.

"It is quite the challenge." Mirio comments proudly.

"So much pressure." Amajiki mumbles.

{Movement on one of his screens caught his eye as the bus finally arrived and the students started to file off following a grumpy Eraserhead like a line of little ducklings. Izuku snickered to himself. Maybe there was a way he could make sure Katsuki heard that? It would be sure to piss him off.}

Izuku glance at Katsuki trying not to laugh. He's not as angry as expected.

{The last student left the bus, Izuku checked the schedule. Wasn't All Might supposed to be there today? As Thirteen lectured the students on quirk safety, Izuku hummed thoughtfully and pulled out his phone to check the news. Mei had called him to ramble about a new idea, right as he was about to get on the train, so he hadn't had a chance to read the headlines that morning like he unusually did.}

All Might winced.

{Sure enough, All Might was all over the news, which meant that he must already be either near or over his limit for the day. Izuku couldn't really fault him, since those people obviously needed to be saved, and being their hero was All Might's job, but he had been really looking forward to seeing his favorite hero perform rescue exercises just like his debut! Even if he wouldn't *actually* be in the same room, it still would have been really cool to watch something like that live.}

"Mood."
"It would have been great."
"Instead we had to *experience* it."

{With the mystery of All Might's absence solved, Izuku turned his attention back to the screens in front of him, where Thirteen was finishing up their lecture as a blackish-purple ...something… started to appear behind them. Izuku frowned and zoomed in to get a closer look. He hadn't seen any obstacles like that in the system, but it was possible he'd missed something…}

"Unfortunately not." Iida gritted his teeth.

{Suddenly, every single camera cut out at the exact same time.

Izuku immediately attacked his keyboard, desperately trying to convince himself that there was no reason to panic. It must just be a weird electrical glitch or something! There was no way that that purple thing was a villain trying to attack the students, right? But, even if it *was* an electrical glitch, there was a failsafe on another electrical system that would trigger the alarms if a certain number of cameras stopped working, and that alarm wasn't going off. No alarms were.}

"Tell Maijima-sensei." Mei strains.

{After a minute of trying to get the cameras back up, Izuku hesitantly stood up and left his desk. It was probably nothing. UA's security was the best of the best! But it still wouldn't hurt to have Powerloader call Thirteen and make sure everything was alright, right? It was completely unnecessary and would probably annoy them because there was *definitely not* a villain attack happening right now, but just in case there was…}

"That's right come to me." Maijima says with a stressed voice.

{Izuku slowly approached Powerloader's desk, only to find him talking to Hanzou. He didn't want to interrupt him while he was helping another student, but there might be an attack happening right now!

"Um, Powerloader?"

"Hmm, Midoriya?" Powerloader nodded to him, "I'll be with you in just a minute."}

"Listen to him." Aizawa grits his teeth.

{Izuku took a deep breath. The longer he thought about it, the more the whole situation just seemed wrong. He familiarized himself with the USJ, and there was nothing that was like that purple thing. Now was definitely not the time to let his social anxiety get the better of him.

“Actually, sir,” Izuku tried to inject as much urgency as he could, hoping Powerloader would get the message without making the class panic, “I need you to check something out. *Now.”*

Powerloader looked at him strangely, “Hanzou, just keep working. I’m going to see what Midoriya needs and I’ll be back in a minute…”}

"Good, good, he got a teacher." Yaomomo sighs.

{When Hanzou shrugged good-naturedly, Izuku walked back to his workroom as quickly as he could without running, grateful beyond belief that Powerloader was so different from his middle school teachers and trusted him without asking too many questions. It was nice and he would probably be crying if he wasn’t so worried.

A part of him half-expected the cameras to be working again when he got back to his computer, making his entire anxiety attack an embarrassing overreaction, but of course, all of his screens were still blank. Izuku waited for Powerloader to follow him in before closing the door.

“Alright Midoriya, what is this about?” Powerloader asked. “It’s not like you to interrupt like that. Mei, yes, obviously. But not…”

“I lost contact with the USJ.” Izuku blurted out.}

"That was blunt." Dabi scoffs.

{Powerloader froze, “I’m sorry, could you repeat that?”

“I was watching 1A over the cameras and everything was fine, but then there was this purple thing and the cameras just stopped working! I couldn’t find anything like that in the system and there should be alarms going off but there’s not and…” Izuku forced himself to stop rambling and took a deep breath. “I think it might be a villain attack.”}

"There is!"
"Oh god, hurry!"
"Please!"

{Powerloader took a sharp intake of breath, “It’s All Might, Thirteen, and Eraserhead there today, right?”

Izuku shook his head, “Thirteen and Eraserhead are there, but All Might’s already at his limit. Um…is there any way you could call them? Just to make sure everything’s alright?”

Powerloader was already pulling out his phone, “Why am I not surprised that you know about that? I’m sure everything’s fine…this’ll just take a minute.”}

"Everything is *not* fine!"
"We're fighting for our lives!"
"Please hurry!"

{Izuku held his breath as the phone rang. After a long minute, Powerloader took the phone from his ear and dialed another number, “Eraser sometimes doesn’t answer the phone, you know how he is, he thinks it’s a waste of time, but Thirteen should have their phone on them.”}

"Not one word." Aizawa warns his friends.

{Powerloader’s face grew more and more worried as the phone continued ringing with no answer until he finally put it away, “I need to report this to Nedzu.”

Izuku gulped and sat down at his desk, pulling his keyboard toward him. So it *was* an attack then, “I’ll try to reconnect with the cameras and keep you updated.”}

"Hacking around a quirk?" Shigaraki snickers "Good luck."

{Powerloader nodded stiffly and left, only to return a second later with a small box that he set down on the desk in front of him, “Have you ever used a comm link before?”

Izuku shook his head and Powerloader took one out and handed it to him, “Ok, channel control is right on the side there, just tune it to channel three and you’ll be able to talk to any of the teachers once they turn their comms on. It’s an open line, so we should be able to hear everything. Do you understand?”

Izuku set up the comm like Powerloader had told him and put it in his ear, then nodded. Powerloader returned the gesture before throwing open the door to the lab, “Hanzou, as class rep, I’m leaving you in charge. Make sure nobody blows anything up.”}

"He's busy!" Mei defends her teacher.

{There were some groans and exclamations, but Powerloader didn’t pay attention to any of them as he closed the door to the workroom and left the lab as quickly as he could. Izuku distantly noted that he didn’t run either. So they didn’t want to cause a panic at the main school then. Ok, cool. His fingers flew over the keyboard as he started troubleshooting the cameras. He had only been at it a few minutes when the PA system crackled to life, but Izuku barely noticed the announcement.}

"He needs to focus it's only logical." Aizawa comments.

"Yeah, sure." Joke replies distractedly.

{“All teachers please report to the front office immediately. Again, all teachers to the front office.”

There was a small string of code that seemed to be repeating and it looked almost like it could be a technology quirk of some kind that was blocking the signals. Izuku felt torn, on the one hand, having a quirk involved meant that it was almost definitely villains, but on the other, Izuku *knew* quirks. All he had to do was find the quirk’s weakness and exploit it.}

"He'll do well." Nedzu says certain.

{“Midoriya?” Powerloader’s voice echoed in his earpiece. “Are you still there?”

“Yes, sir.” Izuku didn’t stop working, even as the other teachers started talking.

“Wait, the little listener’s on the comm link?” That was Present Mic’s voice, he knew it well enough from listening to his radio show for years.}

"Fanboy." Mic smiled briefly.

{“Young Midoriya’s here?” All Might asked.

It seemed like Nedzu was ignoring all of them, since he addressed Izuku next, “Have you had any luck in re-establishing contact with the USJ facility?”

“Not yet, sir.” Izuku said distractedly. “But it is a technology quirk and...Yes!”

“Do you have a visual?” Powerloader asked.

“What?” Izuku’s brain took a moment to catch up. “Oh, no, not yet, but I figured out how the blocking quirk works. It seems to only be blocking a specific type of signal. I mean, that’s obviously what our cameras are using, but I might be able to jury rig things from my side and use another type of signal to connect.”}

"You were saying?" Dabi snarked as Shigaraki growled.

{“Alright.” Nedzu said. “Do that and tell us immediately when you get through.”

Izuku felt a small surge of pride. Nedzu had said *when*, not *if*. He believed in him!}

"So do we!"
"You got this!"
"Do it, do it, do it!"

{He shook his head. No time to think about that right now. Right now he needed to make sure that the teachers weren’t going into this fight blind. It took him a few minutes to hack his way through, but he’d already tried hacking UA twice, so he knew how all the systems worked and with the extra permissions that Nedzu had given him, Izuku had just barely enough experience and authority to do what he had in mind. He hit one final key, the cameras flared to life again, and Izuku didn’t like what he saw.}

"Dammit!" Shigaraki growled.

{Those were definitely villains.

“Nedzu, I have a visual.”

“What’s the situation?”

“Students have been scattered throughout the facility.” Izuku

reported. “Eraserhead is fighting, but he’s outnumbered. There are dozens of them...mostly low level though, it looks like. Thirteen is by the entrance protecting some of the students. They seem to be in a stalemate with one of the villains, probably the one responsible for the purple thing I saw before the cameras cut out, considering they seem to be made of some kind of purple mist.”}

"He took to this position quickly." Koda remarks.

"He, unfortunately, didn't have a choice." Shoji sighs.

{Izuku didn’t know how he was so composed considering that *there was a villain attack happening and oh god, people might die*, but he supposed he was just too busy to panic. Or maybe he was channeling his panic into focus? That made sense.}

"Mood." Izuku deadpans.

{Suddenly, the stalemate between Thirteen and the villain broke.

“Thirteen is down!” Izuku yelled. “I repeat, Thirteen is down!”}

"That's how that happened!?"
"It's so much worse seeing it myself!"
"They survive, remember!"
"That doesn't make it less scary!"
"I didn't say it did!"

{He heard several of the teachers swear over the line, but he was too busy staring at the screen to respond. Thirteen...were they even going to survive that attack? Is this what villains really did? Izuku felt so powerless. He wasn’t even there! He couldn’t even do anything to help them!

“There’s a physical limit to how fast we can go…” Hound Dog growled.

All Might sounded worried, “Maybe I should…”

“No.” Izuku started scanning the cameras again. “You’re already at your limit. If you use what little you have left to get there, you’re not going to have enough energy left to fight the villains. The students are holding their own for now. The one that hurt Thirteen has a warp quirk and turned their quirk against them. It was a lucky shot, and it won’t work against most of the

students.”}

"You're buying them time." Uraraka comments.

"Will it be enough though?" Izuku asks.

"Hey this is your third USJ and all the students survived, even with Mastermind there, they'll do it again." Mei insists.

Izuku takes a breath "Yeah."

{“But…”

“Midoriya is correct.” Nedzu said. “If there is a warp quirk, there might be other powerful quirks as well. The students need you to be as close to full strength as possible. Eraserhead is still there and the villains don’t know that we know of the attack, so it’s better to go as fast as *humanly* possible for now. Midoriya, let us know if anything changes.”}

Tightening grips, deep controlled breaths, everyone is painfully aware that anything can happen.

{“Will do.”

Izuku felt so useless! There had to be something he could do! It might help the heroes if he could figure out why the heroes were there...and for that he needed audio. Izuku used the same hack he’d used on the cameras and started eavesdropping on the various villain’s conversations, switching the microphones rapidly as he tried to overhear anything useful.}

"Excellent idea." Nedzu compliments.

{“...didn’t tell me the plan, kid I swear!” One of the villains was caught in Todoroki’s ice quirk. “All they told me was that they’re gonna kill All Might! That’s all I know.”

Izuku switched mics again as Todoroki started unthawing the villain. Not...the most hero-like, but then again, neither was hacking, so he couldn’t talk, “They’re here to kill All Might. I don’t know why or how yet.”}

"It was harsh wasn't it?" Todoroki winces.

"Once again, you're getting better, kero." Tsu reminds.

{There was a villain near where Eraserhead was fighting, but he almost seemed to be supervising instead of fighting himself. Izuku switched to one of the mics near him as the villain started scratching at his neck. A stress response?}

"Yeah." Shigaraki grumbles.

{“When’s the final boss gonna get here?” The villain’s voice was raspy as he muttered to himself. “We’re running out of NPCs!”

So...immature? It was hard to tell how old the villain was, but considering that he called his own men NPCs, he was almost definitely the leader. Probably antisocial, considering the video game references...final boss must be All Might. Did he know that the heroes were on their way? No, then he would have said something about *final bosses* or even *mini bosses*, but he didn’t, so he was probably thinking that All Might was just late…}

"Just because it's true doesn't mean you should say it." Shigaraki griped.

"He didn't," Toga said cheekily, "he thought it."

"Shut up!" he snaps making her giggle.

{Still, the video game references gave him an idea.

Now that he’d done it twice, it didn’t take Izuku all that long to hack into each of the different zones. Within minutes, he had the weapons of artificial flooding, earthquake simulators, flamethrowers and so much more at his fingertips. With Eraserhead slowing down, he had to do everything in his power to make sure that the students were safe.

“Alright villain, you wanna treat this like a game?” Izuku stretched his hands out in front of him, popping his knuckles. “Then let’s play.”}

"Fuck yeah!"
"Get him!"
"Kick their asses!"
"I have *goosebumps*!"
"Good luck!"

Headcase chuckles to herself as she prepares the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Rumor has it...

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Rumors

{“I just wish Katsuki would leave me alone.” Izuku groaned as Hitoshi helped him bandage yet another burn. “It’s like the more I work on stealth, the more he thinks I’m just ignoring him or looking down on him. I can avoid him for a while, but…”}

"I get worse." Bakugo mumbles.

"*He* gets worse." Kirishima corrects.

{“But that just makes it worse when he finally catches you.” Hitoshi nodded. “Yeah, my bullies are the same way. I wonder…”

Izuku looked up, “Do you have a way to stop it?”

Hitoshi shrugged, “Maybe. Remember when we first met and all my bullies thought you were some kind of villain backup coming to help me?”

Izuku nodded, “It made them run away.”}

"Oh." Izuku smiles as Shinsou smirks.

{“And they stopped bothering me at school for a few weeks.” Hitoshi added. “So, what would happen if we do that again, but, like intentionally this time. I tell my bullies you’re scarier than I am and you tell yours that I’m scarier than you are, so they leave

us both alone so the other one doesn't get angry or whatever. Think that would work."

"Maybe not on Kacchan, but it's still worth it to get rid of everyone else." Izuku muttered thoughtfully. "If we can start the right rumors…"

Hitoshi smiled, "Then maybe we can finally get some peace."}

"I can get behind this." Aizawa uses a frightening grin.

{Toshinori had had nightmares like this. Him, sitting in the principal's office like a scolded child while Gran Torino had tea with Nedzu. He shivered. At least they weren't *training*.}

"Gran didn't seem that bad when we met in Hosu." Todoroki mentions.

"We were injured at the time." Iida reminds.

"That, and me and All Might needed different training." Izuku dismisses.

"You only trained with him a week, kero." Tsu points out.

"No, it was probably more like two or three days because of the Stain thing." Uraraka corrects.

{"I agree with you that waiting until the entrance exam is risky." Nedzu said. "But receiving One for All too early also has its own risks."

"Well, yeah." Gran Torino shrugged. "It's a centuries-old quirk with way too much power for a single person, that's a no-brainer."

Toshinori cleared his throat, "I was having her wait until she was going to enter UA not only to give her time to gain enough muscle but also because she'd be able to freely access UA's resources, for example, Recovery Girl if she did get injured."}

"You rely on me far too much!" Recovery Girl scolded.

{Gran Torino gave him a withering look, "You can just call her, you know."

"Well yes." Toshinori blushed. "But it would take time to get to

her and in the case of a critical injury…”

“It would be safest for the majority of quirk training to happen on UA grounds, where Recovery Girl’s services would be immediately available.” Nedzu nodded. “If that is a major concern then I believe that I might have a solution. We have a training exercise coming up where we will be pitting our students against civilians acting as villains. This gives them an opportunity to test their abilities against a wide variety of skill sets and allows them to see what fighting actual villains will be like on a daily basis since most of the individuals they fight will not be S-class threats. We have a third party coming in as the civilians, however, if your successor were to participate as a villain, it would give her the chance to get to know One for All in an environment where medical services are readily available, as well as Eraserhead, just in case we need to cancel the quirk in the case of an emergency. How does that sound?”}

"You're gonna join us in terrorizing our would-be senpai." Shinsou drawls at Jiro.

The girl smirks at him "Looking forward to it."

{“It sounds perfect!” Gran Torino exclaimed. “Why didn’t you lead with that?”

“It, uh…” Toshinori sighed. “I still think it would be better to wait, but if you both think it’s a good idea then I…well, I suppose that it’s the best course of action. I just want her to have the best chance at success we can give her.”

“Perfect!” Nedzu said. “Then I’ll draft the necessary paperwork for you to give to her. This is going to be so exciting!”}

"At least you know to take advice when it's given to you." Aizawa sighs.

"Sometimes." All Might admits.

{Izuku glanced over to make sure Katsuki was watching as he waved goodbye to Hitoshi, “See you later!”

“Yeah, sure.” Hitoshi lowered his voice. “You sure you want to do this?”

“Yes.” Izuku said firmly. “He needs to know you’re dangerous.”}

"And so it begins." Shinsou smirks.

{Hitoshi nodded and took control as he walked away. Izuku’s brain fogged over and he lost control of his body, but he could still remember the plan. Seeing him like this would make Katsuki angry because he’d automatically assume that Izuku was ignoring him, not that he was brainwashed. He’d hit Izuku like he always did, which would break the brainwashing, and from there it was just making sure he came to the right conclusions. Simple.}

"He'll fall for it." Bakugo sighs.

{“Oi, Deku, who the hell was that?” Katsuki came storming up to him, just like Izuku knew he would, his lackeys trailing a few feet behind. “Well, who was that purple-eye bag idiot, huh?”

Izuku didn’t respond.

“Are you ignoring me?” Katsuki looked like he was about to burst a blood vessel. “I’m right here, you damn nerd, answer me! Who was that?!”

Again, Izuku said nothing, obviously because he couldn’t, and Katsuki did exactly what he wanted him to. He punched him right in the face.}

"Oooo."
"Ouch!"
Hiss

{“Stop ignoring me!” Katsuki yelled. “You idiot! When I ask a question, you answer! Got it?”

Izuku sniffled, “Thank you, Kacchan!”

Katsuki stopped, “What?”}

Ashido snorts "He's so confused."

"He just got thanked for punching someone, he gets a pass." Sero chuckles.

{“Well, Shinso forgot to deactivate his quirk when he left, so I couldn’t actually respond to anything.” Izuku rambled. “He’s got this super awesome brainwashing quirk and it’s really cool!”

Katsuki's lackeys looked absolutely horrified and Izuku fought to keep a smile off his face. It wouldn't be long before the entire school knew about the quirkless kid's "villain" friend who would brainwash them into submission if they made one wrong move. Now, it was just making sure Katsuki believed that Izuku wasn't ignoring him intentionally.}

"This is so fun." Dabi chuckles.

"He's back!" Toga cheers.

"Excuse me for having my tragic backstory blasted on screen." Dabi snarks.

"Won't be the last." Twice waves him off. "**Can't wait.**"

{"But, well, um," Izuku continued, "it's just that sometimes we're experimenting with his quirk and he just forgets to deactivate it and so if it looks like I'm ignoring you, I'm really not, I just...might not be able to respond? I'm sorry, Kacchan, I really am!"

There was a long moment before Katsuki scoffed, "Of course, you'd be too weak to save yourself from some extra's quirk, Deku. Of course, only a brainwasher would hang out with a useless Deku like you."}

"Asshole." Uraraka growls.

{He stalked away, his lackeys following with one last glance over their shoulders and Izuku melted in relief, "You can come out now, they're gone."

Hitoshi rounded the corner, glaring in the direction Katsuki had walked, "Are you sure you don't want me to brainwash him into doing something embarrassing?"}

"Maybe I should look into that for a special episode." Headcase mumbled not quietly enough not to be heard.

{Izuku shook his head, "The important thing is that he leaves me alone and now that we've thrown some doubt onto his theory that I'm intentionally ignoring him, it'll be a while before he finds something else to be mad at. Thank you so much, Hitoshi."

Hitoshi shrugged, "It's whatever. Do you have the notebook I

asked for?”

Izuku nodded and dug around in his backpack before handing it to him, “This will be enough, right?”

Hitoshi smirked as he flipped through the pages, “Oh, this will be more than enough. This is gonna be great.”}

"Something tells me that notebook is more Mastermind than it is Deku." Hagakure mentions.

"That's the point." Ojirou chuckles.

{Hitoshi usually didn’t intentionally go where his bullies hung out, but today was an exception. He had the notebook bent and stuffed into his pocket, ready to fall out the minute things got physical. Now to get his bullies to take the bait.}

"Won't be hard." Toga chuckles darkly.

{“Hey, villain, get outta here!”

Hitoshi bit back a smile as his bullies saw him, he just continued on like he didn’t hear him, but he was walking slowly enough it didn’t take much time for them to catch up.

“What are you doing here, *brainwasher?* ” the ringleader spat. “Are you looking for a beating?”}

"Bouffon grossier." Aoyama pouts.

{Hitoshi just looked at the floor and kept walking until the ringleader shoved him, making him stumble just hard enough to knock Izuku’s notebook to the floor. Bingo.

He was shoved against the wall as the ringleader kept shouting some nonsense or other at him, but that wasn’t the guy he was most interested in. No, that was the one who had just picked up the notebook and was flipping through it, mild terror growing more intense with every page, “Um, guys...I think you need to see this.”}

"Haha, I'm in danger." Kaminari throws his voice higher.

Ashido and Sero immediately start cracking up while Bakugo rolls his eyes.

{The ringleader let go of Hitoshi as the whole group huddled around the notebook, “What the fuck. Is this about us?! Did you make this you damn villain?!”

“No.” Hitoshi answered honestly. “My friend Midoriya did. I didn’t tell him that much about you, but he managed to find out where I lived after only meeting me once, so I’m sure there’s more in there. I haven’t read it yet, sorry.”}

"When he puts it that way..." Monoma chuckles.

{The ringleader’s eyes widened and he shoved the notebook at one of the other bullies, “You. you’ve got a fire quirk. Burn it.” He turned to Hitoshi. “You keep that freak away from us, you hear?”

“I’m sorry,” Hitoshi said with false sincerity, “but I can’t control him.”}

"This is rich." Dabi chuckles.

{The ringleader went pale, “You...but you’re a brainwasher! You can’t…”

Hitoshi shrugged, “I don’t want to get on his bad side, and I’m sure you don’t either. Well, see you at school!”

He walked away as the bullies trembled behind him and couldn’t hold back a small smile. School was going to be a lot more enjoyable after this.}

"Savage!" Jiro cheers.

"I don't normally endorse the suffering of others, but I think I'll make an exception." Momo smiles.

"I second that notion." Hagakure agrees.

"Remind me not to get on your bad side." Ojirou jokes. "Oh, the next ones starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

I need a one shot of Hitoshi controlling Katsuki, haven't decided if I'll actually use it or not, but still.

D?ITHSP... Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

All Might voices his concerns.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

All Might

{Toshinori didn't know what to think. When he'd first seen a little boy with green hair in the first-year hero class, he hadn't thought much of it. The boy was familiar, but he'd been so busy training young Toogata in the last few months that he was having trouble placing him. Toshinori's first thought was that the boy must be a fan or something, someone he had run into at a convention or autograph signing. It would be odd that he'd remember a face from something like that, but it would explain the uncomfortable feeling of recognition that he felt.}

"If that was all it was I'd understand forgetting him." Midnight sighs.

{But there was a problem. The boy didn't act like a fan. Someone who Toshinori would have run into at a convention would most likely be ecstatic to see him as their teacher, smiling brightly or even asking for an autograph like the other students. Instead, this boy frowned and tried hard not to catch his eye, practically running from the room the moment Toshinori told them to go get dressed.}

"Gee, I wonder why?" Shinsou drawls.

{Then came the battle exercise. Honestly, Toshinori hadn't thought much of having the boy, Midoriya he'd learned, go first. It was just the luck of the draw, but he hoped that maybe seeing

the boy fight would help him figure out where he recognized him from.

Watching Midoriya fight the boy with the explosion quirk, Bakugo, was...concerning. All Might listened to their conversation through the radios he had given them and didn't like what he heard. The two seemed to know each other but weren't friends if the intense way they attacked one another was any indication. And then Bakugo had let slip that Midoriya was quirkless and suddenly it clicked.}

"*That's* what it takes?" Dabi scoffs.

{*Is it possible to become a hero even if I don't have a quirk?*

He looked different from the scrawny kid that had clung onto his leg almost a year ago. He had filled out, for one thing, and for another, he carried himself with much more confidence than he had a year ago, but he was undeniably the same boy Toshinori had almost considered giving One for All to.}

"The one he did in *our* world." Uraraka says with pride, bumping her shoulder into Izuku.

{Toshinori had almost stopped the fight right then. He remembered how it had felt to be quirkless,}

"Excuse me."
"He was quirkless too?!"
"Seriously!?"

The room turns to All Might. The skeletal man sighs. "Yes, I was quirkless too. Though just because *I* couldn't make it as a quirkless hero didn't mean no one else could." He smiled as he looked at his successor. "That's obvious now." Izuku beams and as the crowd looks between the two they can't help but join them before returning to the story.

{ to not be able to do anything because he didn't have any power. Someone without a quirk couldn't dream of facing down such a powerful opponent, but the boy had already done the smart thing and run away. Hopefully, he'd have the sense to stay away from the fight and leave the fighting to those who were actually capable of fighting back.}

"Way to ruin the moment." Jiro scoffed at the screen.

{But then Bakugo had cornered him and unleashed an explosion against Toshinori's protests. He felt his heart sink when the smoke cleared and there was no sign of Midoriya on the cameras. This was why it was too dangerous for someone like him to try to be a hero. What had Nedzu been thinking, letting him into the hero course?}

"A quirk does *not* determine ones potential." Nedzu comments with a sharp grin.

{Midoriya had reappeared, injured but alive, and taken Bakugo down quickly and effectively, although Toshinori wondered just how he'd gotten permission to use a gun. It wasn't long after that that he was able to execute a winning strategy with Uraraka to take down Iida and recover the bomb. The class had even been a 50/50 split on who the MVP had been, Midoriya or Iida.}

"It was an honor to win MVP that day." Iida smiles.

"You earned it." Izuku grins while Uraraka nods along.

{So, in short, Toshinori didn't know what to think. On the one hand, Midoriya had won and Toshinori remembered from his notebook that the boy was intelligent, but at the end of the day he was still quirkless, which would always be an insurmountable liability in the field. Surely the other teachers would see it that way too?}

"No, we won't." Ectoplasm disagrees.

"In fact we'll be upset by the suggestion." Cementoss informs.

{All the teachers were gathered in the teacher's lounge to celebrate a successful first day. Powerloader had told him that it was a tradition to come together and talk about their students, making predictions for the upcoming year, and Midnight had even brought a bottle of wine which was being distributed liberally. Nedzu and Aizawa had said they were going to be late, something about taking care of an issue with one of the new students, so Toshinori decided he'd wait until they arrived to breach the subject of young Midoriya.}

"Or you could keep your opinions to yourself." All Might suggests.

{"Yep!" Midnight laughed, "I'm pretty certain the second years hate me right now. I assigned them to find a piece of pre-quirk

hero art and write an essay comparing it to a more modern piece. I'm sure they'll love it after it's done, but you should have seen some of the looks they gave me! Happens every year!"

Powerloader sighed, "At least you didn't have one of your first-years blow something up on the first day. We weren't even supposed to be making anything today! I don't even know how she managed it!"}

"Talent." Mei smirks.

{The door opened and Nedzu and Aizawa walked in. Toshinori thought Aizawa looked a little more tired than usual, but he hadn't known the man very long so he wasn't really sure. What could have exhausted him that much on the first day?}

"It's the first day." Aizawa deadpans.

{"So what did you guys have to take care of?" Mic yelled from the couch. "Don't tell me you expelled a student already!"

Aizawa sighed, "I wish." He sat down and accepted the glass of wine Midnight offered him. "One of my students is the kid that's been bullying Deku for most of his life."

Toshinori thought the name Deku sounded somewhat familiar. Wasn't that what Bakugo had called Midoriya? Wasn't it also the name of some underground analyst Toogata and Nighteye were working with? What a coincidence! It didn't seem like a very common name.}

Many facepalms were heard.

{"What?!" Midnight's jaw dropped. "And you didn't expel him?"

Nedzu clapped his hands together, "Deku insisted we give him a chance to clean up his act before kicking him out and I was inclined to agree. We've made therapy a mandatory requirement for his continued enrollment here." He looked at Hound Dog. "I hope it will be ok that we've made him bi-weekly appointments with you?"

Hound Dog nodded, "Sounds good. Talking to these kids *is* my job after all."}

"And I do it proudly." Hound Dog agrees.

{“Perfect.” Nedzu smiled. “Now that that’s out of the way, does anyone have any good stories to share?”

Toshinori was silent for a moment as he debated how to broach the subject of the dangers of having a quirkless student and Powerloader had already launched into a story before he’d figured out what to say.

Powerloader talked about his hyper student who had somehow managed to cause an explosion with a paperclip, a vial of salt water, and a pack of matches, “She just laughed and said explosions were vital for progress. I swear I can already feel my hair turning grey!”}

"Sorry not sorry!" Mei cackled.

{Shouta rolled his eyes. He knew Powerloader was secretly proud, it happened every year. A student would come along, blowing things up left and right, and inevitably they’d end up at the top of their class. Powerloader had even once joked the bigger their explosion, the bigger their potential. Shouta didn’t understand it himself, but then again, he didn’t know anything about support items, so he supposed it must make sense to someone in the thick of things.}

Mei is practically vibrating in her seat.

{When Powerloader had finished, Midnight laughed and turned to All Might, “What about you, All Might? Any students catch your eye?”

All Might coughed up a little blood in surprise at being addressed directly and sat frozen for a minute.

“I have some…concerns.” He said slowly.}

"No, don't say it." Yagi begs.

Gran pats his arm.

{“Hmm?” Nedzu set down his tea cup. “And what would those be?”

“One of the students in the hero course is quirkless.”

The room went silent.}

"Awkward." Kaminari coughed.

{“And that is a problem because…?” Shouta knew he sounded angry, but this was *his* student All Might was talking about. Had he even seen Deku completely annihilate his opponents in the combat exercise, or had he written him off completely as soon as he learned he was quirkless?}

"Beware the Dadzawa." Hagakure whispers making Ojirou snort.

{All Might looked at him incredulously, “It’s incredibly dangerous! The student almost died because he was put in a combat situation with quirked students!”

“He almost died because his bully was let into UA!”

“Wait,” Mic held up a hand, “are we talking about Deku?”

“Of course we’re talking about Deku! Who else is quirkless here at UA?” Shouta was practically yelling. Deku hadn’t *asked* to be viciously attacked, yet here All Might was acting like it was all his fault.}

"Idiot." Aizawa growls.

"Agreed." Yagi sighs.

{“The fault for today’s incident, All Might, lies only with the student that attacked him with excessive force.” Nedzu said calmly. “And that student has already been disciplined. It won’t happen again.”

“How do you know that?” All Might turned to the principal, “Every time he is in a fight he’ll be outmatched! It’s dangerous and unfair, to both young Midoriya and those training to be heroes.”}

"That's no different than the rest of us." Kirishima frowns.

"Yeah, danger is kind of what we signed up for." Kaminari huffs.

{“Don’t talk as if Deku is somehow less than the other students." Aizawa growled. "He has more potential for heroics than most first years I’ve taught and he definitely has more than the student who attacked him!”}

Bakugo winces.

{**“Enough!”** Mic used his quirk to be heard above the bickering heroes. Shouta glared at All Might, who was glaring back. “What makes you so concerned about Deku becoming a hero, All Might?”

All Might looked between the teachers like he couldn’t believe he had to explain something so obvious, “Quirkless people can’t be heroes. They’ve never been able to, it’s not their place.”}

"Their place!"
"Hell the fuck no!"
"God this is pissing me off!"

{“Are you even hearing yourself right now?” Shouta said, “How can you be so prejudiced? A few decades ago they said animals couldn’t be heroes either, but I don't hear you speaking out against the principal!”

All Might crossed his arms, “Well, what are you basing your opinion off of, huh? It sounds to me like you just want to be inclusive, even if it puts Midoriya and the other students at risk. That’s not kindness, that’s stupidity.”}

"That's rich coming from you!" Mirko snaps.

{“Oh that’s rich coming from you.”}

Hawks tries not to laugh.

{“Now, now, Aizawa.” Nedzu said. “All Might raises a valid point. If Deku had not shown potential for heroics, we would not have let him in. Maybe you can explain to All Might why Deku is a good fit for the hero course.”

Shouta laughed humorlessly, “Where do I start? Maybe the fact that he can break down and figure out how to counter a quirk within seconds? Or the fact that he already has his gun license due to all the hours of training he’s spent with firearms? Training that, need I remind you, somehow wasn't required for Bakugo's gauntlets. Or, I don’t know, maybe the fact that Deku convinced the entire underground he was a *goddamn retired pro* for seven months until we finally met him? Is any of that good enough for you?”}

"Please listen." All Might sighs.

{“Oh, I agree with you that he’s intelligent.” All Might said, “But that doesn’t mean he shouldn’t stay behind the scenes where he’ll be safe.”}

"And if you direct your attention to the teachers' section you'll see All Might burying his head in his hands in secondhand shame." Ashido says dramatically.

{“Safe my ass!” Shouta yelled. “Being a hero is dangerous for anyone, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do it! You should know that better than anyone.”

“I do know that better than anyone.” All Might said. “That’s exactly why I’m so against this! If even someone with a powerful quirk like mine can be injured so badly in the line of duty, a quirkless kid wouldn’t last a day.”}

"Then there wouldn't be any heroes by that logic." Kendo hums.

{All Might apparently hadn’t realized he’d powered up his muscle form until Shouta canceled his quirk and he deflated. Shouta smirked at the confused look on the idiot’s face.}

"That never gets old." Mic chuckles.

{A loud rattle of china interrupted them and they both turned to look at Nedzu, who had slammed his teacup down on the saucer, “That is quite enough of that.” he said, “All Might, Deku has been accepted to the hero course and nothing you say is going to change that fact. This is not an inclusion initiative, but rather the simple fact that if I did not believe he could become a hero, I would not have let him in. Aizawa,” he turned to Shouta, “I understand that you are upset, but you need to control yourself as well. The last thing UA needs is infighting among its teachers.”}

"Upset Nedzu is scarier than normal Nedzu." Kaminari shivers.

{Shouta took a deep breath and sat down as All Might did the same. He glared at All Might, who scowled back at him, and Shouta looked away. He could keep things *civil*.

“I wish the kid had taken my advice…” All Might grumbled and Shouta felt ice in his veins.}

"Oh god, stop taking." Tsukauchi begs.

{“And what advice would that be?”

All Might looked up in surprise, apparently, he hadn’t planned on being heard. He glanced between Nedzu and Shouta, but it seemed Nedzu was also curious since he made no move to stop the conversation.

“Well, um…” All Might cleared his throat, “I actually met young Midoriya for the first time almost a year ago. He stopped me after I saved him from a villain and asked me if he could be a hero.”

“And what did you tell him?” Shouta knew he wasn’t imagining the hint of horror in Midnight’s voice, but All Might didn’t seem to notice.}

"Idiot." Shinsou growls.

> {“I told him it was impossible, of course.” All Might said innocently. “It would have been cruel to say anything else. I encouraged him to try to be a doctor or police officer if he was really being honest about wanting to help people.”
>
> Shouta stood up and walked out of the room. He didn’t need the murder of the number one hero on his resume.
>
> Toshinori watched Aizawa storm out of the room and shook his head. Aizawa would come around eventually. He turned back to his fellow teachers, who were staring at him with a mixture of anger, horror, and disgust and he furrowed his eyebrows in confusion.
>
> “What?”}

A silence fell over the room as headaches are soothed from such a disaster. It doesn't take long for the next chapter to start.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

> https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

It's time to rescue Todoroki.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

All For One

"How will you all handle him without me?" All Might worries.

"We'll have to wait and see." Nedzu sighs.

{“Ok, I hate to be the one to say it, but I’m just gonna come right out and ask,” Yamada said, “Is there a possibility Todoroki was taken because the league thought he had One for All?”

Nedzu shook his head, “They shouldn’t have. That’s why we went on with the sports festival like we did, despite All Might’s death. All the students’ quirks were on display and none of them were similar to All Might’s.”}

"A better reason than our world." Aizawa sighs.

{“That being said,” Tsukauchi said, “We are fairly confident that All for One is behind the league of villains. The existence of the Nomus confirms that much.”

“So what are we supposed to do?” Midnight asked, “We can’t just leave him alone, not if he’s going to go after our students.”

“Do we even have a choice?” Snipe asked, “If All for One is really as strong as All Might was at his prime, then how are we supposed to counter that?”

“If his quirk is what makes him so strong,” Aizawa said darkly, “then we’ll just have to take it away.”}

"Go sensei!" Hagakure cheers.

{The teachers looked at each other and nodded. They would take down this villain no matter how strong he was.

They owed it to Todoroki.}

Todoroki winces "They are not going to react well when they find out."

{Shouto sat unbound at the bar, watching with a mixture of amusement and horror as Dabi tried to hit an increasingly enraged Shigaraki with peanuts. Toga was sitting beside him, cheering Dabi on as one of Twice’s personalities did the same and the other pleaded for him to stop annoying Shigaraki for all of their sakes. Kurogiri simply shook his head fondly and continued cleaning glasses. Already there was more love and camaraderie in this group than Shouto had ever felt at home and he wasn’t quite sure how to deal with that.}

"That's sad." Uraraka worries.

"I don't have that problem anymore." Todoroki assures with the smallest hint of a smile.

{“So, Todoroki, I see you made the right decision.”

Shouto looked up in shock to see a smiling Midoriya sitting in the window, “Midoriya? What are you doing here?”}

Snort
"Well, you see..."
"Here we go."

{Toga almost knocked him over as she ran past him and threw her arms around Midoriya, who hugged her back without hesitation, “Mind-chan! Mind-chan! You’re back!”

“Mastermind,” Kurogiri said, “It’s a pleasure, as always. May I get you a drink?”

Shouto’s eyes widened. Midoriya was *Mastermind?* He looked over to see Midoriya shaking his head, “I’m afraid I’m here on business

this time, not pleasure."

"Then get to the point!" Shigaraki grumbled.

Midoriya had finally untangled himself from Toga's arms and he sighed, "I just thought you guys might like to know that the heroes and police are gathering outside. It looks like they're planning a raid to come to rescue Todoroki." He looked at Shouto and gave him a knowing smile, "Too bad they're a little too late for that, huh?"}

"That's right." Dabi grins.

{Shigaraki scratched his neck, "Annoying heroes! How did they find us? Cheaters!"

"Now Tomura," Shouto flinched as an unfamiliar voice came from the television, "It does not matter how they knew where to find you. All that matters now is that Mastermind was kind enough to tell us of their plans. How long do you think we have before they strike?"

Midoriya shrugged, "An hour at the most. If I were them, I'd likely use the planned press conference as a cover."}

"Seems obvious now." Shigaraki grumbles.

{"Might I suggest retreating?" Kurogiri said calmly. "We have other properties that the heroes will not have discovered, and Mastermind has given us more than enough time to clear out this location."

Shigaraki stopped scratching, "I guess you're right, Kurogiri. Come on, guys, grab your stuff, and let's go."

Kurogiri was already busy warping away his vast stores of alcohol as many of the others left to go pack. Shouto himself didn't have anything to do, seeing as they didn't bother to grab any of his things when they kidnapped him. He turned his attention to Midoriya, who was wearing what he now recognized as Mastermind's villain costume, but with the hood and mask down, "Are you a member of the league?"}

"Not quite." Izuku shrugs.

{Midoriya laughed and shook his head, "No, I've found I work

best if I don't tie myself down to any one group. But I've done a few jobs for the league now, and I like working with you guys."

Shouto started when Midoriya referred to him as part of the league. When he'd agreed to become a villain with his brother, joining the league hadn't really been on his mind, but...he supposed that *was* what he'd done, wasn't it? It was weird being referred to as part of a group like he'd finally found a place to belong. He shook his head.}

"We are doing *so many* kid things when we get back." Kaminari claims.

"But with Todoroki this time." Sero agrees.

{"But you showed up in person for the USJ attack. Why go that far if you weren't a member?"

Midoriya's face soured, "Killing All Might was...personal."

Shouto waited for him to continue, but it appeared he'd said all he was going to say on that subject, so Shouto asked another question, "Then, why are you helping us now? From what the news has said about Mastermind, you mostly wait for people to hire you, but don't care what they get up to when they aren't consulting with you."}

"Probably for you." Izuku murmurs.

{Midoriya smiled softly, "I see a lot of myself in you Todoroki. I was abused for years by the person who was supposed to be my hero while the people who were supposed to protect me turned a blind eye. No one ever saved me, not because they couldn't, but because no one ever wanted to. Ever since I turned to villainy, I've been happier than I ever was before and I want the same thing for you. I just couldn't let you go back to living in hell, not when I had the power to get you out."}

"Even as a villain you try to be a hero." Shinsou sighs.

"Villains always try to justify their action, kero." Tsu reminds.

{Shouto found himself blushing. No one had ever cared about his happiness before, certainly not his father. And yet, here Midoriya was, acting like Shouto's happiness was important enough to work for. Even back at the sports festival, before Shouto even considered becoming a villain, Midoriya was there, letting him

know that he was more than his father's abuse.}

"Wait do my eyes deceive me?" Ashido asks.

"Is *Todoroki* blushing?" Sero grins.

Meanwhile...

"Oh no." Izuku groans while Todoroki deadpans.

{"Todoroki? Are you ok?" Midoriya was looking at him with concern.

"Shouto." He replied before he could help himself and he blushed a little more, "I don't want to go by my father's name anymore."}

"Sure." Hagakure teases.

{Izuku smiled and nodded his head in understanding, blushing a little himself, "Alright Shouto. You can call me Izuku if you want."}

"A ship has sailed!" Ashido cheers.

"Can we not!?" Izuku begs.

"Sorry Midoriya, we need something light-hearted to focus on, especially in this story." Hagakure doesn't seem sorry at all.

{Aizawa crouched on a rooftop halfway between the two raid locations. Vlad King and Principal Nedzu had just started the press conference, which meant that it was almost go time. Aizawa was just grateful that his quirk was part of the plan so he didn't have to deal with the vultures. He couldn't imagine the disaster it would have been if the villains had taken another student, say Bakugo. Aizawa shuddered. If they'd taken Bakugo, the school would have been blamed for broadcasting his violent behavior and UA would be in a lot of trouble. As it was, the blame was resting solely on the villains, for now, but a press conference was still deemed necessary for this big of an incident.}

"Instead my father will get the blame." Todoroki seems conflicted.

"Once the other you debuts." Uraraka nods.

"How do you think you'll do it?" Mei asks.

"Well..." Todoroki starts.

Headcase interrupts "Let's have the story tell us?"

"Right, of course." Todoroki agrees.

{A voice came over his earpiece, “The Nomu factory has been secured.”

“Thank you, Best Jeanist,” Tsukauchi’s voice said, “You and your team keep an eye out. The villains might try to recover them.”

Aizawa sighed, one down, one to go. If he had to guess where All for One would show his face, he would bet on the bar, since that’s where they were keeping Todoroki and where most of the villains were located. That meant that the most difficult part of the mission was still to come.}

"In the end it won't matter." Aizawa sighs.

"Maybe not for Todoroki, but for everyone else..." Mic comforts.

{“Pizza delivery!” Edgeshot called out, then nodded to Gang Orca, who used a sonic attack to knock down the wall. Kamui woods ran in after him, ready for his first major battle since he had been injured by Mastermind months ago.}

"Oh good you recovered." Mt. Lady beams at her colleague.

{“All clear.”

“What?” Edgeshot unlocked the door and walked in, “Where are they?”

The heroes looked around the room for a moment before seeing a yellow post-it note stuck to the counter. They crowded closer to read it.

Just missed us ;) }

"I bet that was Mind-chan." Toga giggles.

{“We have a problem,” Aizawa frowned at Edgeshot’s voice, “They’re not here.”

“What do you mean they’re not there?” Endeavor growled. He had been sent to the Nomu factory since his fire was one of the few things that could harm a Nomu and they were concerned this whole thing might really be an elaborate trap for the number one hero.}

"A truly devious ploy if true." Tokoyami rumbles.

{“I mean, the only sign anyone was ever here is a post-it note saying, ‘Just missed us’ with a winky face. They obviously knew we were coming.”

Aizawa ignored Endeavor’s frustrated rant. If the villains weren’t at the bar, where were they? And how would they get Todoroki back?}

"Unfortunately you won't." Momo sighs.

{Suddenly the radio went silent and there was an explosion in the distance.

“Jeanist, come in, what the hell is going on over there?” Aizawa held his breath, but there wasn’t an answer.}

The room is silent as tension rises.

{“Aizawa, go help them!”

Aizawa ran as fast as he could to the Nomu factory and almost jumped off a roof before he realized that the building that was supposed to be there… wasn’t anymore.

“I don’t need your quirk,” a voice was saying, “It wouldn’t pair well with Tomura’s disposition.” A grunt and Aizawa looked down to see Best Jeanist’s eyes glaze over as a man in a black mask punched a hole through his gut. Endeavor was just starting to stand back up with rage in his eyes, while Tiger had been knocked unconscious by the blow.}

"I never wanted to see this again." Koda whimpers.

{“Tsukauchi,” Aizawa whispered into his radio, “I have eyes on All for One.”

“My apologies, *heroes*,” All for One said, “But I simply cannot allow you to take these Nomu. They are essential to young

Tomura's success."

"Surrender, villain." Endeavor declared, "You have nowhere to run!"

All for One chuckled, "If I wanted to run, *you* wouldn't be able to stop me."}

"I wouldn't make it easy." Endeavour growls.

{Endeavor shot a wave of fire at him, but All for One simply stepped aside and let the flames pass by him harmlessly.

Endeavor growled, "Flashfire Fist - Jet Burn!" He used both hands to create a massive wave of flames.

"Air cannon plus spring-like limbs," All for One said calmly as a massive wave of wind blew the flames off course, sending them flying toward a bank of apartments that were engulfed within moments.}

"If he wasn't a villain I'd have so many ideas about combining quirks." Izuku whines.

{Screams sounded from the apartments and Aizawa swore, "Tsukauchi, get Backdraft or someone over here! I can't intervene yet, not if we want to capture this bastard."

"I already called him," Tsukauchi said, "Wait for backup and stick to the plan."}

"Not being able to do something hurts so much." Midnight says through gritted teeth.

{All for One and Endeavor kept fighting, neither landing a hit on the other but increasing collateral damage with every attack.

"Flame Tornado!" Endeavor yelled, jumping into the air and using his flames to propel him forward as he spun toward the villain.

"Air cannon plus spring-like limbs, kinetic booster x 4, strength enhancer x 3." He seemed almost bored as his attack flung Endeavor straight through the nearby buildings. Already weakened from the fire, they started collapsing almost immediately. It was only by using his fire to melt through the rock that Endeavor managed to survive. He wasn't going to last

much longer if this kept up.}

"This is so much worse." Mic chokes out.

{“Is everyone in position?” Aizawa whispered impatiently and almost sighed with relief when a chorus of affirmatives came over the radio.

Aizawa took off his goggles and set them on the roof. Powerloader had made him a special version of his hero costume just for this fight. It looked mostly like his standard one, except this one was made to withstand the heat of endeavor’s flames and had a hood and mask that he pulled up to protect his hair and face. Finally, he put on the new goggles, still painted gold, but this time fully enclosed with a mirror effect. A temperature regulator wrapped around his chest and he turned it on, shivering at the artificial cold.}

"I-I can make that." Mei stammers.

{After he finished adjusting his new suit, Aizawa took a deep breath and jumped off the building, landing in a roll. All for One and Endeavor were still exchanging blows as Aizawa crept closer. Despite the fact that he was in full view, All for One didn’t seem to notice him, which was when Aizawa took note that his mask didn’t have any eye holes. He must be using some sort of infrared heat vision to see, which made Aizawa almost invisible in the flames. All the better.}

"Thank god." Jiro takes a shaky breath.

{The fight shifted and Endeavor caught sight of him, nodding silently and retreating a few steps to put some distance between himself and All for One. Aizawa ran to stand in between the two fighters so that he could see All for One but not Endeavor and he activated his quirk.

“Now!”

“Prominence Burn!” A massive beam of fire shot past him, turning quickly from orange to blue and Aizawa started sweating as the temperature regulator on his suit struggled to keep up. He held his quirk for as long as he could, but he had to blink eventually.}

"Please be done." Shoji begs.

{“Midnight!” He yelled above the noise of the flames and Endeavor stopped his attack. Midnight quickly ran out from behind a building and cranked her quirk up to full force, completely shrouding the area in purple mist.

Aizawa heard Endeavor fall to the ground behind him and saw All for One collapse in front of him, heavily burned, but not dead. As the gas took hold and the police surrounded the area, Aizawa finally closed his eyes.}

"They did it!"
"He got him!"
"Go sensei!"
"It's over!"

Meanwhile...

"Stop pouting." Dabi prods at Shigaraki.

"Never." The man responds.

"Hey you never know, maybe Mind-chan will break him out." Toga cheers.

Shigaraki perks up "Maybe... let's get on with it then."

"Let the heroes celebrate for a bit." "**It's not like we could stop them.**"

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:TGG Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Izuku makes some progress in his online classes.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Knowledge

{Izuku was starting to wonder if maybe Eraserhead had been telling the truth when he said that he was smart. He had just been doing his assignments like he normally did, but because he could submit them multiple times, he'd decided that it would be best to submit the first time, get a preliminary score, and then correct what was wrong after, but...there wasn't much to correct. When he was at Aldera, he'd been changing half his answers because he'd been convinced he couldn't be right, but either his online assignments were way easier than the stuff he'd been doing or he needed to learn to trust himself more because he was consistently getting higher scores than he'd gotten since preschool in less than half the time!}

"That's cause you're a genius!" Kaminari cheers.

{His favorite class was his quirk theory elective. It was really easy since they were basically testing him on common sense, but they'd linked him to a lot of really cool articles that explained why quirks worked the way they did. Izuku had to keep himself from getting distracted and reading all the articles in the bibliographies of his assigned readings because he really couldn't afford to waste any time. He couldn't help it! It was interesting!}

"You're having so much fun." Uraraka coos.

"It's *quirks*, Uraraka, quirks! You know how I am with quirks." Izuku informs dramatically.

"We all do, kero." Tsu smiles.

{He was also enjoying his programming class. It was a new way of thinking, but it was a fun challenge, like solving a puzzle! In the last two weeks since he'd officially begun online classes, his vigilante time had gradually turned into his programming time. When he'd wake up in the middle of the night, instead of restlessly trying to get back to sleep, he would get up and do his programming homework until he got tired. Most nights, he would spend an hour or two researching extra resources on hacking specifically, since that obviously wasn't covered in depth in a beginning programming class, but Izuku felt like he was actually starting to get the hang of it!}

"That's officially three hackers." Mei chuckles.

"Three?" Uraraka asks.

"Shadows mentioned hacking briefly." Iida informs.

"Yeah, I know that, but when Mastermind mentioned La Brava I thought she taught him hacking too."

"She probably did." Todoroki agrees.

"Deku's the only one that's not a hacker now." Izuku mentions.

"For now." Shinsou shrugs.

{He was currently in the middle of taking a test for quirk theory. It was taking longer than he thought it would, but then again, he hadn't really paid attention to the introduction that said how long the test would take. It seemed to be cumulative, whereas most of the other tests he'd taken had only asked questions about the most recent unit, but Izuku saw the logic of occasionally testing old material. He figured that as long as he was done by the time Mom called him for dinner, it wasn't that big of a deal.}

"That sounds more like a final." Monoma scoffs.

{It was almost two hours later by the time he finally submitted the test and stretched out his sore muscles, ignoring the way his arm itched beneath the cast. At least he was healed enough that

he was able to type again, his programming class would be much harder if he was still having to do everything one-handed. Izuku glanced at the clock. He still had about twenty minutes until dinner, so he might as well get a head start on the next unit.}

"Dévouement inspirant." Aoyama smiles proudly.

{Izuku scrolled to the bottom of the page and frowned when he realized that the *next page* button was nowhere to be found. That was strange. Normally, when he finished one assignment, he just pressed the button and it took him to the next one. Maybe he had to go back to the index page for the whole class? That seemed needlessly complicated, but Izuku didn't want to question the website designers, so he clicked on the overview tab and scrolled past everything that said *complete* so he could figure out what unit was next, only to reach the bottom of the page.}

"He finished the whole class early." Jiro grinned.

{Izuku did a double take.

Had...had the test he'd just taken been the final? That would explain why the whole thing had been cumulative and why it had taken so long, but...he *really* needed to pay more attention to what he was doing, that was so embarrassing! But, sure enough, there was a little checkmark by the final exam, stating that he'd completed it just a few minutes ago. Was he just really far ahead in that class, or....?}

"Yes, you are." Ojirou chuckled.

{He clicked through his other classes, his eyes widening a little more every time he realized that he was only one or two a unit or less from completing a class. The only exception was art, but that was because it took him so long to draw every assignment. How had he finished them so fast?

Izuku closed his laptop and frowned. He supposed it made sense. He didn't have anything else to do while he healed besides work on his homework, and he wasn't too tired from running around as Viridian to stay awake in class. Or maybe it was because he wasn't worried about his bullies stealing his books or beating him up after class? That had been a constant in his life ever since he turned four, so he hadn't really realized how distracting it was until he didn't have to worry about it anymore. It was kinda nice.}

"Midoriya?" Iida got his attention "You didn't happen to keep a list of the things you've had to replace, did you?"

"Some of it. Why?" Izuku tilts his head curiously.

"I'd like to see it when we return." Iida says calmly. *And to hand it to my family's lawyers for a lawsuit.*

{He felt strangely guilty about feeling so grateful though. Maybe if he were stronger, he would have been able to deal with the bullying without letting it affect his grades, but instead, he had just run away like a coward. He really was a Deku, huh? It was a good thing he'd given up on being a hero because heroes weren't cowards. They didn't run away.}

"We do when it's necessary." Aizawa states firmly.

{It was a good thing vigilantes did.

Izuku shook his head and went out into the kitchen, where Mom was setting the table. She smiled as he came in, "Hi, baby! How were your classes today?"

Izuku shrugged, "I think I need to pay more attention because I could have sworn when I registered that each class was the equivalent of one semester, but I finished one of them today, so they have to be shorter than that. I think they're just quarter classes."}

"Nope." Kaminari chirps.

{"Still, it's impressive that you're already done, Izuku!" Mom said proudly. "I'm glad you're doing so well, baby. You seem a lot happier."

Izuku shrugged. He was still a Deku, still useless, but at least going to school online meant that Mom didn't need to worry about him, so it was worth it. If his leaving Aldera meant that she was happy, then it was worth it, no matter if it meant he was a coward for running away from his problems.}

"Just let me hug him already." Hagakure huffs as Ojirou pats her on the back.

{The only thing that could make her happier was if she didn't have to deal with him at all, but there was nothing Izuku could

hope to do about that until he was able to go out as Viridian again.}

"No."
"Stop it!"
"She'll miss you."

{Shouta was so tired. It wasn't surprising, considering that tired was his default state, but the last few weeks had pushed his normal *tired* into *exhausted*. There had been at least two instant villains a week, and trigger sales were booming in accordance with the marketing, so Shouta was neck-deep in problems and interrogations as he tried to make headway on the case. To make things worse, Viridian was still missing.}

"I wish we could tell him the little listener was okay." Mic whines.

{At least he wasn't the only one worried over the vigilante's sudden absence. Amplifier and Rock Lock had promised to tell him immediately if they ever caught sight of him, and a lot of other heroes in surrounding areas were starting to keep an eye out just in case he'd just switched neighborhoods. Shouta still couldn't help himself from checking the obituaries, but thankfully, that still hadn't turned anything up. He just hoped that, wherever Viridian was, he was safe and taking care of himself. Actually, him taking care of himself was probably too much to hope for, considering the kid's mental state, so Shouta would be happy to settle for him being safe.}

"He is." Izuku promised.

{He was currently at home on his day off, doing an internet deep dive for anything regarding the symbol of evil. When he'd mentioned the lead to Mic the other day, he'd said that he'd seen it on some conspiracy theory message boards, so that's what Shouta was currently reading. Most of the theories were completely insane, with mad leaps of logic, but each of them was based on small kernels of truth that could be useful eventually.}

"There are conspiracy theory message boards?" Todoroki asked with a sparkle in his eye.

"I'll help you find them when we get home." Izuku sighs.

{Finally, he caught sight of what he was looking for. It was a post

from a few years ago but had a very substantial thread attached where other people had shared their evidence and experiences. Now to sort the evidence from the bullshit.

The Symbol of Evil, also known as All for One, is widely considered to be an urban legend that was popularized around the dawn of quirks. The story goes that All for One was a man that could take one person's quirk and give it to another person, a skill that he used to gain a cult following in the substantial chaos of the time. The story is often discounted as the wishful thinking of quirkless people who wanted quirks, or of quirked individuals who experienced bigotry and persecution because of their quirks. }

"If only he was just a legend." All Might sighs.

{*But what if it wasn't?*

The assumption definitely makes sense! But most legends are based on real events that people just didn't understand, or that got twisted by the years and countless retellings. Considering how widely known this "legend" was during the dawn of quirks and how quickly it spread, there had to be quite a bit of truth to it, truth that perhaps has been discounted or hidden by the hero commission to hide the truth of the nightmare that might still be in our midst…}

"Not exactly but close enough." All Might mumbles.

"Seeing some of his *other* schemes is going to be annoying." Gran grumbles.

"At least it's broken up by other stories." Recovery Girl comforted.

"Speaking of..." Nedzu chirped.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Izuku changes up the levels.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Dust and Ashes

{*"Alright villain, you wanna treat this like a game? Then let's play."*

Nedzu felt a thrill at his protege's words and couldn't help the sharp smile that came to his face even as his coworkers shivered. He wasn't 100% sure what had prompted the challenge, since Midoriya's near-constant muttering had trailed off after giving a passing analysis of who *appeared* to be the villain's leader, but whatever was about to happen, it was sure to be simply *marvelous!*}

"Right you are." Headcase grins at the [REDACTED].

{Nedzu had never been more grateful than he was at that moment for his protégé's mumbling habit. For never having received any training when it came to the *man in chair* position, as it was often fondly called, Midoriya was doing remarkably well! When he addressed his comments to the heroes, Nedzu noted that he was trying to pick the largest threats and most relevant details to mention, all while keeping his head and hacking through the system. Whatever small details his student happened to leave out were covered by his unintentional mutterings, so it all worked out. Nedzu had been a tad concerned when Midoriya had identified the glitch as the effects of a technopathic quirk, but it turned out that his worry was unfounded, as his student had bypassed even that challenge with little issue.

He was so proud.}

Midoriya blushed as his friends added to the principal's compliments.

{“He...he sounds so confident.” All Might noted quietly.

“He should.” Midnight whispered back. “He beat a technology quirk from *inside* the system.”}

"That's a scary talent." Ojirou shakes his head.

{“And if it wasn’t for him, we wouldn’t know about the attack at all.” Present Mic looked slightly pale, most likely wondering if the next thing Midoriya reported would be his husband’s murder.}

"Husband!?" Ashido shrieks.

"That has to be sensei right?" Kaminari shakes her shoulders.

"Definitely." Sero nods.

Meanwhile...

"Look Sho, we're married!" Mic teased.

"Why me?" Aizawa groaned.

"Seeing mister doom and gloom be all soft is going to be fun." Midnight adds.

"Can we get back to watching me fight for my life?" Aizawa sighs.

{_Never having had an interest in romantic connections himself, Nedzu couldn’t even imagine what he must be going through. All they could do now, however, was get there as quickly as possible and trust Midoriya to handle the rest.}

"I'll do everything I can." Izuku agrees.

{Izuku checked the cameras to make sure Eraserhead was still going strong before turning his attention to the students. The plaza wasn’t a disaster zone, so he didn’t have nearly enough control of it to do anything useful and if Eraserhead were here with him, he’d probably insist that Izuku help the students first.}

"I would." Aizawa affirms.

{**Prioritize the rescue.**

The students in the shipwreck zone seemed to be in the most immediate danger. There were just two students, a girl with a frog quirk and a boy with adhesive hairballs if Izuku remembered correctly. The frog girl could probably jump to safety with little issue, but the boy was panicking too much for her to do anything without leaving him behind, something that wasn't helped by the fact that the ship was *literally sinking*. It must have been one of the villains' quirks that damaged it and...yep, they all had quirks that took advantage of the water.}

"How are we going to get away without Midoriya's plan?" Mineta whimpers.

{"Ok, easy enough." Izuku muttered. "Let's just see how useful your quirks are without any water."

Izuku hit a key and the pool started draining. It was slow going at first and Izuku was almost worried that the water level wouldn't go down fast enough to do any good until he noticed that one of the drain settings was labeled *whirlpool*.}

Nedzu began to laugh. Just a chuckle. **For now.**

{"Hmm," Izuku clicked on it, "I wonder what that does…"}

"Oh those poor villains." Mic says in pity.

{It was as if the gates of hell had opened up beneath the villains as the water began to vortex down the drain. The villains were yelling, accusing one another of manipulating the water and creating enough general confusion that the frog girl was able to grab the ball boy by the waist and jump them both to safety. As they passed overhead, the boy started throwing his balls at the villain in a panic. Izuku almost wanted to facepalm. What kind of idiot thought it was a good idea to call attention to himself during a villain attack?}

"Excuse me for panicking!" Mineta cries.

{It ended up working out even better than Izuku could have hoped for, though, since the balls followed the flow of the water and brushed up against the villains, making them stick to each other. By the time the two students had reached the relative safety of the shore, the pool was almost entirely empty and the

villains had somehow formed a ball of bodies that would be almost impossible to escape unless those balls somehow lost their stickiness, which according to Izuku's analysis of the ball boy's quirk, wouldn't be happening anytime soon.}

"See, it was helpful!" Mineta defends.

{One zone down...a lot of others to go.

Todoroki seemed to have things handled in the landslide zone, and Katsuki would probably just get mad if he received any help in the ruin zone, so that left the fire zone, the downpour zone, and the mountain zone for Izuku to choose from…}

"Thank you for the vote of confidence." Todoroki smiles softly.

"Anytime." Izuku chuckles.

Meanwhile...

"I mean, he's not wrong." Kirishima sighs. Bakugo groans.

{"Izu-kun!"

He startled as Mei slammed the door to his workroom open, "Hanzou is a boring class rep! He won't even let me make a *little* fire!"}

"That's a good thing!" Powerloader cries.

{"Not now Mei-chan." Izuku said distractedly. The kid with a tail quirk...Ojiro? He was fighting alone in the fire zone and there was a guy approaching him from behind.

Mei came up behind him, "Is that…?"

"The USJ." Izuku took control of one of the flamethrowers and turned it up to high. Ojiro whirled around as he heard the villain scream, but couldn't waste too much time figuring out what had happened, since another villain was already running toward him, using some kind of telekinesis to control the flames. "It was supposed to be a standard rescue exercise for 1A, but…"}

"Let me help." Mei insists.

{Mei was silent for a long moment as Izuku cut off all the fire within fifty feet of Ojiro and his current opponent. The villain's

eyes widened in shock as his entire weapon supply disappeared before he could blink, but Ojrio was the first to recover, using his tail like a whip to knock the guy out.}

"Nice moves." Hagakure compliments.

"Thanks." Ojirou accepts gracefully.

{“What can I do to help?”

Izuku glanced over at his best friend, surprised to see her looking serious for one of the first times since he’d met her. It would have been enough to creep him out if he couldn’t see the familiar gleam of determination and passion in her eyes as they quickly zoomed in and out, flicking rapidly between the different screens as she took in every detail.}

"Let's do this." Izuku nods.

{“Close the door. We don’t want the other students panicking.”

As Mei complied, he turned his attention back to the fire zone. Ojiro had started running after he took out his last opponent, but he obviously didn’t know where he was going, because he was just running deeper and deeper into the maze.

He sensed Mei behind him again, so he jerked his head toward the extra chair sitting against the wall and slid over to give her room to sit beside him. With one hand, Izuku grabbed one of the earpieces from the box Powerloader had left on his desk, and with the other, he created a wall of flames right in Ojiro’s path to force him to turn tail. Good, he was heading in the right direction now.}

"Brutal but effective." Dabi chuckles.

{Izuku threw the comm to Mei right as she sat down, “Channel three, controls are on the side. I’ve already gotten access to the disaster zones and the teachers are on their way, so we just need to keep the students alive until they get there.”

Mei grinned as she plugged in another keyboard and pulled it toward her, “So I *do* get to make explosions?”}

Maijima groaned loudly.

{Izuku couldn't help smiling back, "As many as you want. Here, you can have the fire and downpour zones. I've been using the fire to guide Ojiro, that's the student with the tail, to the exit. I don't know how the ones in the downpour zone are doing…"

"Just leave it to me, Izu-Kun!" Mei cackled, using a flamethrower to keep Ojrio from turning down a dead end. "This is so much more fun than listening to the class rep!"}

"Please listen to your class rep." Iida begs.

"Only when I have to." Mei chimes.

{"Midoriya," Powerloader somehow managed to sound both amused and exasperated, "did you really need to give Hatsume access to *more* dangerous experiments?"

"Oh!" Mei exclaimed, "Are those the teachers?! Hi, Powerloader!"

"If she handles two of the zones, I can focus on the mountain zone and the plaza." Izuku explained simply. "Don't worry, Mei-chan knows destruction better than almost anyone I know!"}

"That's the problem." Maijima groans.

{Powerloader groaned, "That's what I'm worried about…"

Izuku turned his attention to the mountain zone just in time to see the girl with the earphone jack quirk, Jiro, push the electricity boy in the path of one of the villains, which didn't make any sense until the villain went down. Izuku rolled his eyes as the electricity boy gave the girls a confident thumbs up... was his name Kaminari? Anyway, how much control did Izuku have? A full earthquake would mess up the students as well, so he should try to avoid that, but...ah, that would work.}

Nedzu starts laughing a little louder.

{As a villain swung to attack the creation quirk girl... Midnight had totally helped design that costume, hadn't she? Whatever, not important right now. Just as the villain was about to land a hit, he found himself launched into the air as a pillar of rock suddenly popped up out of the ground directly beneath him. Izuku grinned. The teachers probably used this feature mostly to change the landscape and give upperclassmen a variety of landscapes and obstacles without having to constantly rely on Cemontoss's quirk,

but he could use it to...well, quite literally trip up the invaders, considering that he'd raised up a small ledge and made one of the villains fall flat on their face as they ran toward Jiro.}

"That'd be so trippy to see." Jiro chuckled.

{Keeping one eye on the mountain zone, Izuku glanced over toward the plaza, "Nedzu, is there anything I can use in the plaza? The only thing I see is the fountain, but that doesn't seem like it's going to be very useful and I don't think the villains have noticed yet, but Eraserhead is starting to slow down."}

"I noticed." Shigaraki grins.

{There was a soft gasp on the other end of the line, but Izuku couldn't tell which of the teachers it was from. Vaguely, Izuku was aware that one of the mountain zone villains had popped up out of the ground and was making his way toward the plaza as well. Finally, Nedzu spoke up, "There're not any disaster simulators there, but every building on campus has defense systems if you can access them."}

Nedzu stops laughing. "Oh, dear."

{"Alright, weapons." Izuku muttered and poked around for a moment, "Perfect, found them."

"Good." Nedzu said. "Now, be aware that most of the firepower is not as...precise as this situation requires, and that the more lethal options might take a few minutes to warm up. Be careful, Midoriya."}

Izuku sucks in a breath.

{Izuku nodded, his throat suddenly very dry, "O-ok. Um, that's a lot of pressure."

"Says the kid who's already started fighting back." Hound Dog growled. "Don't overthink it, kid. Just do your best and save who you can. Everything else will have to come later."}

"That's really all he can do." Kendo comments.

{Izuku glanced at Mei, who nodded at him firmly, and he felt a flood of determination take over him. "Yes sir! I'll do my best!"

He took a moment to look over his weapons options, deciding to use the guns only as a last resort. It looked like the best option he had was some kind of weighted net. He shot one experimentally at a knot of villains that was standing far enough away from the fight that Izuku didn't have to worry about hitting Eraserhead. The net hit the group head-on, and instantly, all action stopped as everyone in the plaza turned to look and tried to figure out where the net had come from. The leader started scratching at his neck again.}

"Well I wasn't expecting a tower defense level." Shigaraki defends.

{After his initial success, Izuku was feeling a little more confident, so aimed another net at the leader. If he could trap him, then…

Izuku fired, only for the net to disappear into a purple portal right before it hit its target. Another portal appeared near Eraserhead and the net came flying out, forcing him to dodge. Izuku grimaced, "Sorry. My bad."}

"Not your fault Problem Child." Aizawa sighs.

{The warp villain appeared next to the leader, looking quite a bit worse for wear from his fight with the students at the entrance. Izuku noticed a few purple balls stuck to the armor on his neck, along with chunks of concrete, so the two students from the shipwreck zone must have made it to the entrance and helped with the fight there. The two villains seemed to be talking, so Izuku scrambled to access the audio from the plaza, turning it up loud enough for both him and Mei to hear the conversation.}

"Good, good, gather information when you can." Nedzu sips his tea.

{"...allowed one of the students to escape, Shigaraki." The warp villain's voice was deep and smooth. It would almost be calming if it didn't belong to a villain. "He will almost definitely raise the alarm, which means that the heroes will be here soon."

Izuku glanced over at the cameras for the entrance. Which student had escaped? Oh, that was perfect.

"The kid with the engine quirk escaped." Izuku told the teachers. "He should be heading your way now."}

"It's kinda strange, you not knowing our names." Uraraka mentions.

"It is trippy, kero." Tsu agrees.

{“Good.” Nedzu said. “That means that the villains won’t be expecting us so quickly. Notify us if anything else changes.”

“Yes sir.”

The leader was scratching his neck hard enough to bleed, “If you weren’t our escape route, Kurogiri, I’d dust you right now! And tell me, why is the information we got so far off? I was told this would be a mob raid, so how come this level is acting like a tower defense?!?!”}

"You know yourself so well~" Toga teased.

Shigaraki rolled his eyes. "Obviously."

{Izuku gulped. They’d noticed his interference. He shook his head and forced himself to focus on the hints of the leader’s quirk. He’d said something about dust, so did he have a quirk that allowed for dust manipulation? If so, Izuku would need to limit destruction in the plaza…

The villain that Izuku had seen escape from the mountain zone stepped between the two leaders and interrupted their conversation, “We have a problem. I don’t know *how*, because I haven't deactivated my quirk since I stepped through the portal, but someone from the outside got through and seems to be using the building to fight back.”}

"They know!" Dark Shadow cries out worried.

{The lead villain, Shigaraki, if Izuku had heard correctly, suddenly stilled, “So, what you’re saying is that someone is using cheat codes?”}

Todoroki narrows his eyes at the screen.

{“Um…”

The warp villain, Kurogiri apparently, interrupted the blocker’s confusion with an air of professionality, “I don’t suppose there’s a way to tell where the interference is coming from? A set of coordinates would be most appreciated.”}

Silence

{Shigaraki whirled to pin the blocker with a manic stare, only partially visible behind the creepy hand that the villain was using as a mask, “Yes! Tell us where the cheater is! Now!”}

"No." Ashido whimpers.

{Izuku forgot how to breathe and he could barely hear Mei’s gasp beside him as she moved to crush his hand. If they figured out they were at the main school, they could warp to get them, which would put the rest of the student body in danger! The teachers were all gone to handle the attack, and if the location of the attack changed, they wouldn’t be able to get here in time…}

"Please don't be capable of that." All Might begged.

{The blocker took a hesitant step back and raised his hands nervously, “That...that’s not how my quirk works! I can block certain kinds of electronic signals, but I’m not a tracker! Even if I could track the interference like that, I’d end up with an IP address, which doesn’t necessarily tell you where the computer is physically located!”}

Relief spreads through the audience.

{Shigaraki took his hand away from his neck and spread his fingers, “Then what are you even good for?”

Before Izuku could even react, Shigaraki lunged and gripped the blocker’s face. A strangled scream left the man’s mouth before it was cut off as first his mouth, then his vocal cords, then his lungs disintegrated under the villain’s touch. Within thirty seconds, the only thing left of the blocker was a pile of bones, blood, and…

“Dust.” Izuku breathed.}

The theater is once again silent as the crowd processes the violent death they witnessed. Some tear up and others grip their armrests. The villains glance at the heroic group waiting for the next chapter to start.

"It just *had* to be a cliff hanger." Shigaraki sighs.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

New outfits!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Fashion

{Kyoka had never been one to chase hero fights. She'd watch them if she saw one on her way home from school, but she'd had far too many nightmares about hearing someone call out for help from under the rubble and the hero fighting couldn't hear them. She always woke up feeling helpless, which was part of the reason she wanted to be a hero in the first place. She hated the idea of hearing someone call out for help and not being able to do anything about it.}

"That's both a horrifying and wonderful reason to be a hero." Izuku said to the girl.

"And I'm doing it." Jiro smiles.

{So no, she didn't make a habit of watching hero fights, but she also didn't make a habit out of leaping in headfirst before she looked, so she'd been trying to watch as many of All Might's fights as she could ever since he had offered her One for All. She knew that she could always catch the recordings on the news later, but it was just *different* in person. She couldn't really listen to a recording, not in the same way. The poor quality mics that the news stations used would never have been able to pick up the subtle hum of energy surrounding All Might as he resolved a hostage situation.}

"Yeah, the cameras do not do him justice."
"Seeing him firsthand was so cool."
"The feel of the battlefield shifted greatly in his presence."

{Kyoka closed her eyes and focused on the steady buzz of energy, straining her ears to sort it out from the sounds of the crowd and the fight. One for All sounded almost electric, but the part that had surprised her the most wasn't that it had sound, it was the fact that it was almost harmonic. It made sense since each holder in the past had contributed their energy to the quirk, but the subtle way that they interweaved was weirdly haunting. She just wished she could actually *listen*.}

"Haunting is a good word for it." Izuku mumbles to himself.

{Whenever All Might was fighting, it was too loud to really enjoy the depth of the sound. She could still hear One for All when All Might was in his smaller form, now that she knew what to look for, but it was quieter and almost nonexistent, so she couldn't really hear it. She was curious about how it would sound when she actually *got* the quirk. Hopefully, she'd at least have a bit more time to listen then.}

"I should talk to her about tempo-based martial arts." Mic grinned.

{The crowd surged and someone was pushed into her from behind. Whoever it was ended up dropping a notebook in front of her and she extended her earphone jacks to catch it before it hit the ground. She grabbed the notebook and looked around, "Um... who…"

"Uh, mine, sorry!" A boy around her age brushed his green hair out of his face and grimaced. "Sorry, I was trying to get closer and…"

He trailed off as his eyes caught on something in the fight and before she could say anything else, he had snatched his notebook from her hands and was already shouldering his way through to the front. Kyoka looked through the crowd after him, her eyes widening when she realized that All Might was starting to steam and the hum of One for All was taking on a strained quality. He needed to get out of there.}

"That was a brief meeting." Jiro chuckled.

"I'm sorry! It's a hero fight and he's running out of time!" Izuku

defends with a laugh of his own.

{Thankfully, another hero leaped into action and Kyoka breathed a sigh of relief as All Might was able to slip away. She frowned as she thought of the boy. Had he...had he realized the fight was almost over? She sighed and shrugged it off. It was weird, but probably not that important in the grand scheme of things. The crowd was starting to clear out and Kyoka ducked inside the mall to get away from all the people and the noise. She wasn't in any rush and All Might obviously wouldn't be up for any training right now, so maybe she could just window shop and kill time while she waited for the crowds from the fight to go away. Kyoka started walking toward one of her favorite stores that sold the kind of alternative-style clothing that she liked to wear. She could use a new pair of pants anyway.}

"Guess that explains the chapter title." Ojirou comments.

"Shopping!" Hagakure cheers.

{"Hitoshi…" Izuku said hopelessly. "I think we're lost."

"Hitoshi raised an eyebrow, "Physically or metaphorically? Because I think both apply."

Izuku swallowed. "I know *darkwear* sounded like a good idea when we saw it on the map, but I have no idea where to even start"}

"Oh you poor fools." Jiro pouted mockingly at them.

"You've seen what I wear." Izuku deadpans.

{"Pants." A voice said behind them. "Or maybe skirts if that's more your style."

Shinso whirled around to see a girl their age with what looked like headphone jacks hanging from her ears looking at them in amusement. "No, we're trying to prioritize freedom of movement. So pants will be fine."}

"They are easier to fight in." Dabi smirks at Toga earning himself an elbow to the ribs.

{Izuku's eyes widened, "You're that girl I saw earlier! You were

watching All Might's fight!"

"And you're the one that ran into me." She shrugged and her earphones mimicked the movement.

Izuku immediately started mumbling, "Those aren't just *hanging* from her ears, they *are* her ears, which means it's part of her quirk. That's so cool! It must come with advanced hearing and...

Hitoshi dug an elbow into his ribs before he could start muttering full force, "Izuku, we're not trying to scare this one off."}

"It's a habit." Izuku huffs.

"Not a bad one." Mei flicks his forehead to keep him from beating himself up over it.

{Izuku blushed, "Sorry…"

The girl shrugged again, "Whatever. You were right about the enhanced hearing, so I'm used to tuning things out."

"I'm sorry." Izuku mumbled, blushing deeper. "That must get really annoying."

"Again, I'm used to it." The girl said. "My name is Jiro, by the way."

"I'm Shinso." Hitoshi said. "And this chatterbox is Midoriya."

Jiro nodded, "So what led to this complete overhaul in style? Did your girlfriends break up with you or something?"}

Both boys squawk at that.

{Hitoshi didn't know why he ended up blushing at that, but hopefully it wasn't too noticeable, "No, it's uh, it's kind of hard to explain."

"Hey, I'm not here to judge." Jiro rolled her eyes. "I'm also not here to help, but you two were wandering around like lost little puppies and it was kinda obvious that you were desperate."}

"She has a point." Uraraka teases.

{"Thanks." Hitoshi said dryly.

Jiro smiled for the first time since they'd met her, “No problem. I'm gonna be a hero, so helping those who can't help themselves is kinda in the job description.”

Hitoshi gave her a tired glare as Izuku latched onto what she'd just said, “You're going to be a hero?! Us too! That's really kind of why we're here. We're trying to get some combat experience, so we're doing this thing where we're pretending to be, like, fake villains, kind of? To help hero students in training!”

Jiro shook her head, “You do realize how fake that sounds, right? If I wasn't participating in the exact same exercise I'd be tempted to think you two were looking for vigilante gear.”}

"I mean if all else fails, we know Midoriya would make a good one." Satou shrugs.

{“Wait, you're doing the same exercise?” Hitoshi gave her a skeptical look. “At UA?”

“No, at Shiketsu.” Jiro scoffed. “Of course at UA. no other school would be crazy enough to put on an exercise like that.”}

"True."
"We do some crazy shit."
"Nedzu's probably planning to add it as we speak."

{“True.” Hitoshi hummed. “So are you looking for an outfit for the exercise too?”

“No, I was just planning on throwing together some junk from my closets. Jiro shrugged. " I dress like this every day.”}

"Convenient." Shinsou deadpans.

{“So what you're saying is that you're the perfect person to help us.” Izuku grinned. “You're already familiar with the exercise and you said it yourself, this is your aesthetic. So...we start with pants, right? We want something with a lot of pockets if we can.”}

"For the babies!" Mei cheers.

{“Hm...I think I saw a couple pairs over here.” Jiro started leading them to another section of the store. “You'll want to stick with blacks and greys, obviously, since I'm guessing you're

wanting to blend in with the cityscape."

"Exactly." Hitoshi said. "But we also want to be memorable if we *are* seen."

"So maybe a pop of color." Jiro said thoughtfully. "And you'll want to look stronger than you are, which means a looser cut around your arms and legs to hide those noodles you two have going on."

"Hey!" Hitoshi cried indignantly. "We've been working out!"}

"Not enough." Jiro teases.

{Jiro shot him an amused look, "Obviously not enough."

"I mean, she is kind of right." Izuku grimaced. "We are mostly planning to rely on strategy and intelligence, rather than brute strength."

"Well, at least you've got a brain." Jiro shrugged. "That's more than some heroes I can mention. These pants look like they'll be alright."

Things were a lot less confusing with Jiro helping them and Hitoshi found himself enjoying her snarky commentary as she helped them sort through the different options. A lot of items, like armored shirts and sturdy boots, they realized they were going to have to buy somewhere else, like an army surplus store, but they at least got a good start on their villain look. The worst part though was buying the jackets.}

"Really, the jackets?" Jiro asks.

{"This is not a jacket." Hitoshi deadpanned, holding up the offensive article of clothing. "This is a crop top."}

Midnight snorts "And yet, it is in fact, a jacket.

{"Yeah, but it's what's in style." Jiro snickered. "What? You don't want to show the world your nonexistent abs?"}

"Hey." Shinsou groans.

{"Ha ha, very funny." Hitoshi rolled his eyes. "It just doesn't seem very practical."

“We’ll be wearing armored shirts underneath.” Izuku argued. “And the shorter cut will allow for more freedom of movement. Plus the longer version is three times more expensive, so…”

“So we’re getting crop top jackets.” Hitoshi sighed. “Joy. I’m getting the one with the purple trim. Izuku, you get the one with green. It’s nap time.”}

"Are you sure you're not genetically related to Aizawa?" Todoroki asks.

"It depends on the world~" Headcase chimes in before Shinsou can responds.

"Okay, I know you said anything can be different, but genetic relationships? That seems..." Shinsou wasn't quite sure how to word it.

"Trippy, like my dad could be literally anyone." Izuku mentions.

"Including All Might." Todoroki says smugly.

A pause "Oh shit, you right."

{“You’re ridiculous.” Jiro said. “But good luck with the exercise. Not sure if we’re competing against each other or just with the hero students, but either way, good luck. Maybe we’ll get pitted against the same group of students.”

Hitoshi found himself smiling, “Yeah, that’d be fun. You can recognize us by our crop tops.”

“Oh, you’ll look great.” Jiro smiled. “I’d better be going. See you later.”

Hitoshi waved to her as Izuku gathered everything to take up to the register, “bye.”}

"That was a fun trip." Momo smiles.

"Maybe we can convince them to go on a trip with us when we get back." Jiro suggests.

"We can hear you." Shinsou deadpans while Izuku chuckles.

{Nedzu grinned as his employees started scanning through the list of names they needed to clear and approve files for before the exercise began. It was mostly a formality since all of these

applicants had already had to pass a basic background check to get this far and the vast majority had either participated in the exercise in previous years or had come recommended by a pro hero with a few notable exceptions. Nedzu was curious what his staff would think of their volunteers this year. They had a good mix of skill levels, not to mention the fact that All Might's new successor would be participating, so no matter what, it was bound to be an interesting exercise.}

"Background checks are a basic necessity for such an event." Nedzu said to himself turning to his notes on the exercise in order to add to them.

{"Most of these are repeats, so they already know what's up." Snipe said after a long pause. "Major thing is just to make sure they don't get pitted against the same students."

"We'll also have to skim over their files to make sure they're not trying to slip anything through." Aizawa pointed out. "But yes, they already know the rules, so their files won't need as much work."}

"An editing faze, good." Aizawa comments.

{"There's some fresh blood here too." Midnight hummed. "We've got a few younger applicants, actually. Ooh! There are even a few middle schoolers! Cute little babies."

"A few?" All Might blinked in surprise. "I thought there was only one."

"There's actually four." Nedzu gave an excited little chirp. "How about we start with them since you find them so interesting?"}

"This exercise would be great practice for the entrance exam." Mic remarks.

"Maybe we could advertise." Midnight considers.

"Not publicly." Aizawa objects.

"Within the hero community at least." Midnight amended.

{"That sounds wonderful." Recovery Girl said. "Who's first?"

"This Kaminari kid…" Cementoss pointed to the name. "That's

Electra's kid, right?”}

"Your mom's a Pro?" Sero questions.

"Uh..." Kaminari bluescreens.

"In some worlds." Headcase gives the Bakusquad a pointed look so they'll drop the subject.

{“Yes.” Nedzu said. “And if you’ll look, you’ll see that she is participating as well.”

“I think I remember hearing that she takes each of her kids on a special trip every year, just to help with work-life balance, what with her being a pro-hero who takes a lot of overseas missions.” Thirteen said. “It’s sweet.”

“If this is a family bonding activity, then the kid must be trying to be a hero.” Aizawa said. “He’s the right age to be applying to UA.”}

Obviously." Dabi snarks.

{“That he is.” Nedzu nodded. He was always so proud of his teachers when they caught onto something small like that, even if it *was* painfully obvious once one had all the necessary information. It was entertaining watching them grow. “And he and his mother seem to be planning on working in a team, so I’ll let you take a look at both files.”

He started passing around copies of the files the Kaminaris had sent in. They were very convincing files, obviously, since Electra had seen more police files than the average person, and had all the information on their quirks and fighting style that one would see in the files that were usually given to heroes at the start of a mission, exactly as they wanted it.

Aizawa gave the files a once over for less than a minute before shutting them and pushing them away, “Electra knows what she’s doing. Let’s stop wasting time and move on to the next one.”}

"There're nicer ways to say that, Sho." Mic chides. Aizawa just shrugs.

{“That’d be Kyoka Jiro, isn’t that right?” Recovery Girl piped up. “Gran Torino suggested she do the exercise.”

“I haven’t heard from that old geezer in forever.” Snipe laughed. “How’s he doing?”}

"I'm doing fine, thanks for asking." Gran snarks.

{“Maybe I’d know if he called more often.” Recovery Girl griped. “That old man likes to pretend he has dementia, but from how often he forgets that other people exist, you’d think he actually did.”

“Well, let’s hope he didn’t forget to help her with her file.” Aizawa said, reaching out for Jiro’s file.

“She’s got a pretty rockin’ mugshot.” Present Mic said. “And a quirk that enhances her hearing will make for an interesting challenge for our kiddos, that’s for sure.”}

"Thanks teach." Jiro huffs.

{Nedzu watched All Might squirm in his seat as his new coworkers essentially passed judgment on his successor without him being able to acknowledge her as such.}

"Wow, that puts things into perspective." Mic comments.

"It's hard not to defend him or add my own opinion when you're all talking about him." All Might admits.

"You don't have to hold back anymore." Midnight reminds him with a grin.

{_If he insisted on keeping one for all a secret, then he would have to get used to situations like this, and ones that were even more odd and uncomfortable once she started showing signs of her new quirk. Nedzu didn’t know why he hadn’t thought of having All Might’s successor participate in this exercise earlier. It would be a nice test run to see how the quirk affected her and by the time school started, he’d be prepared with a nice cup of tea and a list of suggestions for improvement. It was perfect!}

"If the green one doesn't get to me first." Jiro smirks.

{“Well, we’ll have to have her make a few minor changes.” Thirteen said. “But it mostly looks good. You said we have two other kiddos their age, right?”

“Ah yes, Izuku Midoriya and Hitoshi Shinso.” Nezu grinned and pulled out the file, passing copies around the table. The file was suspiciously thin, something that did not go unnoticed by his staff.

Mic accepted the file with a confused look, “Is this it? Which of the two is this one for?”

“Both.” Nedzu said. “They always work as a team, so one file is sufficient.”}

"But it's so small." Hagakure says confused.

{“I wouldn’t describe *this* as sufficient.” Aizawa said dryly.

“There isn’t even a mugshot!” Midnight said. “How are they supposed to be villains without mugshots?!”}

"Really?" Aizawa deadpans. Midnight smiles sheepishly at him.

{“There *is* a photo…” Snipe pointed out hesitantly. “It looks like security footage, but still…”

“There’s none of their actual faces though.” Cementoss said. “They’re wearing masks in that one.”

“That is because they have never been arrested.” Nedzu said. “Or so they claim. What little they did put in the file says that they specialize in stealth and that one of the two has experience with hacking, so they are rarely if ever caught on camera, and never out of costume.”}

"So cool!" Toga cheers.

{“It’s a bold claim.” Ectoplasm said. “It might put our students at a disadvantage.”

“But they’re going to get cases with hardly any info once they graduate.” Aizawa groaned. “We’re going to let them keep their mystery file, aren’t we?”

“As you would say, it’s only logical.” Nedzu chirped happily. “Although if the rest of you do not agree, we can insist they add more information to it.”}

"Please agree." Izuku pleaded.

{“They had to identify themselves and their quirks to submit, right?” Mic asked. “What powers do they have?”

“Hitoshi Shinso has a brainwashing quirk.” Nedzu said. “Which is part of the evidence the two cited for how they had never been arrested. Izuku Midoriya is quirkless.”

The room went quiet.}

As did the theater.

{After a long moment, Midnight spoke up, “I say let it stand.”

“Yes.” Thirteen nodded. “I hate to say it, but those kids are going to need every advantage we can give them.”

“Plus, it’s not as if they’ll be able to keep themselves hidden for long.” Ectoplasm said. “Our students are smart, they’ll figure out Shinso’s quirk the first time he uses it.”

“Yeah.” Snipe agreed. “It’s just like Aizawa said. It’ll be good for them to practice filling out sparse villain files, but their advantage won’t last more than a day or two, assuming they stay in the exercise that long.”}

"Rude." Shinsou deadpans.

{“Which isn’t very likely.” Aizawa sighed. “They might surprise us, but I’m not counting on it. Whatever, the point is to have a wide variety of skill levels. The students need some easy take-downs if they’re going to be fighting the likes of Electra as well.”}

"He's going to eat those words." Aizawa smirks.

{“So we’ll put them fighting the same group.” Cementoss said. “May as well throw in the other middle schooler too. Maybe they’ll be able to make some friends.”

“We should pit them against the second years, just for a good balance.” Midnight added. “The third years would crush those kids in a heartbeat and the first years don’t do the exercise.”}

"Perhaps they should." Nedzu considers.

{“Then it’s decided.” Nedzu clapped his paws together. “Those four will all face off against our second-year students in the exercise!”

Yes, this year was going to be interesting indeed.}

"Okay today's emotional rollercoaster is over, can I sleep now?" Shinsou groans.

"Yes, everyone have a nice night, hopefully, the next round of episodes is a little more upbeat." Headcase says cheerfully.

"I'm not holding my breath." Aizawa comments as he ushers his student into their dorms before heading to his own.

"Fair enough." The entity chuckles.

After a peaceful night and a *truly* impressive breakfast buffet, the next chapter plays.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

Day 6

D?ITHSP... Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Eraser complains to his friends.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Venting

{Group Chat

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Who wants to go out for drinks?}

"Sho? Asking people to *drink* with him? Is the world ending?" Midnight asks very dramatically.

"To be fair All Might just finished sticking his foot in his mouth." Aizawa defended.

"He's right here Sho." Mic scolds.

"No he's absolutely right." All Might sighs.

{87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Long day?

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Let's say it this way, if the sun doesn't set right now, I will take

Deku's gun and shoot it.}

"Mood." Shinsou deadpans.

"We *just* woke up." Uraraka giggles.

"And?" He replies, hiding a grin.

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

That bad, huh?

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Remember Deku telling us about "Kaachan?"}

Bakugo groans as Kirishima pats his back.

{72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

Please say you know who it is.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

He's in my class.

87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Don't you mean *was* in your class?

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

No.

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

You didn't expel him?!}

"Fair reaction." Aizawa deadpans.

"You did expel an entire class that one time." Joke chuckled.

"I re-enrolled them." he defends.

{12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Deku convinced me not to because their old teachers actively encouraged the brat's behavior, but we're making him go to anger management therapy twice a week. If he doesn't improve within the semester, I'm kicking him to the curb.

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

As a teacher, I want to say that was the best decision, but as a friend I want you to tell me this kid's address so I can punch him in the face.

72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

We're heroes, Joke. We can't just beat up children.

87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

She never said she'd tell Kaachan she was a hero.}

"These people are fun." Uraraka cheers.

"Pros should not be condoning such violence." Iida states.

"I think they're joking." Mei tells him.

"They definitely are joking, kero." Tsu confirms.

{12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Nobody's beating him up… yet.

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Also, that's not the only thing that happened.

58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Oh? What other juicy details do you have?

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

I think it's probably best to discuss it in person. I don't necessarily need my opinions of the number one hero immortalized in the group chat.}

"Thanks for that." Yagi deadpans.

"Anytime." Aizawa snarks back.

{72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

What did Toshinori do this time?}

"I love how resigned he comes across." Jiro snickers.

"He has known All Might for quite some time." Momo nods.

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

What bar are you at? I'm on my way.

87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Me too, I'm always down to hang out.

12579 shared their location

72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

Am I invited as well?

12579: *(Eraserhead)*

Sure, but I have to warn you that I will be complaining about All Might the whole time, and I'm not gonna edit it. I know how close you two are, so if that makes you uncomfortable, don't come.}

"Sensei's such a good friend." Ashido grins.

{87657: *(Mr. Brave)*

Don't worry old man, we won't hold it against you.

72598: *(Sir Nighteye)*

In that case, I think it would be best for me to sit this one out. Joke can give me the cliff notes version tomorrow.}

"Will do!" Joke cheers.

{58726: *(Ms. Joke)*

Will do!

Shouta put his phone in his pocket when he saw Fukukado and Nakamura walk in. They looked around for a minute before

spotting him at the bar.

“Hey Eraser,” Fukukado slid into the seat next to him while Nakamura sat on his other side, “So, do you want to talk about it?”}

"Why would I invite you to drink if I didn't?" Aizawa groaned.

"Some people are just like that." Brave shrugged.

{Shouta sighed. Normally he wouldn’t talk about what was stressing him he’d just… stew for a while until it went away. He didn’t even know really *why* he’d gone to the group chat but… if anyone could understand the unmitigated disaster his day had been, it was these guys. He swallowed the rest of his drink.

“So, Deku’s in my class, right?”

“Right.” Fukukado nodded. “And you said his bully is too?”

Shouta nodded, “I was just walking to class, preparing to teach them about situational awareness like I do every year…”

“Wait, is this the trick you do with that stupid sleeping bag of yours?” Nakamura asked as he grabbed a handful of peanuts from the bar. “I’ve heard horror stories about that thing from interns.”}

"We're kind of numb to it now." Shoji comments.

"We have faced far greater darkness than our teacher's habits." Tokoyami agrees.

{Shouta scowled, “It’s *practical.* ”

“Doesn’t stop you from looking like a caterpillar!” Fukukado laughed.}

"We still haven't actually seen that." Dabi griped.

"We have to see it at least once." Shigaraki hoped.

{Shouta glared at her, “ *Anyway,* I was walking to class when I hear explosions and,” he ran a hand through his hair, “the way the kid said Deku’s name… he said it like he was talking to a bug so disgusting he couldn’t even be bothered to squish it. I had to activate my quirk just to keep him from exploding Deku.”

“Exploding him?” Nakamura tilted his head, mouth full of peanuts.

Shouta nodded, “Remember those burns all up Deku’s arms?” The other two nodded. “The brat’s name is Katsuki Bakugo and his quirk is Explosion, so his hands are basically grenades. His old teachers apparently didn’t want to ruin his chances of being a hero, so did nothing to curb his... violent tendencies. In fact, from what we could tell, they actively encouraged him and purposely created opportunities for him to torment Deku.”}

"He doesn't have scars from me, he doesn't have scars from me, he doesn't have scars from me." Bakugo whispers to himself; his squad gives him space, knowing the boy enough not to interrupt him.

{“Those little...” Fukukado was practically vibrating in rage, “That’s not what a teacher is supposed to do!”

“I swear,” Shouta shook his head, “the only reason I didn’t expel him on the spot was that I knew that Deku would blame himself for it and we already have a hard enough time convincing him that not everything is his fault without throwing the expulsion of his childhood *friend* into the mix.”

“Ok...I get that.” Nakamura rolled his eyes. “But is it bad I still kinda wish you’d expelled him?”}

"No."
"You good."
"I kinda want the same."

{Fukukado reached over and cuffed him over the head, “Don’t pay attention to him, Eraser. He doesn’t know the difficulties of raising the next generation.”

“That’s because he *is* the next generation.” Shouta muttered. Nakamura gasped in betrayal as Fukukado laughed and clapped him on the back.}

"Hey!" Brave gasps scandalized. Joke roars with laughter as their friends try to hide their own amusement.

{“Alright Eraser, so what happened next.”

“So, I decided to give Bakugo until the end of the day and took the class out for the quirk assessment test, which Deku totally

aced by the way. I had him come up with a strategy for the class to take me down and they managed it in less than five minutes. I swear it was one of the most impressive things I've ever experienced."}

"Aw."
"We impressed sensei!"
"I have never been so proud of myself."

{Fukukado pretended to wipe tears away from her eyes, "That's our boy!"

"But then he went to heroics."

Nakamura raised an eyebrow and gestured for him to continue.

"He was paired against Bakugo in a battle exercise."

Fukukado gasped, "No! Is he ok?"}

"He's alright." Uraraka comforts.

{Shouta rubbed the bridge of his nose, "Now he is. He was brought to Recovery Girl with burns all over his body from an explosion large enough to *blow out a wall*. Why Bakugo thought *that* was a good idea is beyond me, but I don't have any idea how that kid's brain works." He took a deep drink of the beer the bartender had just brought him. "Deku still won, by the way. He actually shot Bakugo and another student. Multiple times."}

"He sounds so proud." Hagakure giggles.

{Fukukado laughed, "Good for him!"

Shouta chuckled, "Yeah, and apparently it was a good wake-up call for Deku too. He's stopped calling him "Kacchan" at least."}

Both Bakugo and Midoriya flinch at that.

{Fukukado and Nakamura cheered and Shouta shook his head at their dramatics. "I was ready to expel him, obviously, but Deku insisted we give him a chance to change." He rolled his eyes. "I get where he's coming from, but part of me wants Bakugo to mess up so badly that we'll have no choice but to expel him" He sighed. "But if he does manage to clean up his act, that's theoretically better for everyone, right?"}

"Yes it is." Nedzu assures gently.

{Fukukado pouted, “A lot less satisfying though.”

Shouta nodded solemnly, “A lot less satisfying.”

“But,” Nakamura leaned toward him, “you promised beef on All Might and you haven’t even mentioned him yet.”}

"Here we go." All Might sighs.

{Shouta scowled so deeply that both Nakamura and Fukukado leaned back instinctively, “Oh, that’s coming. All Might is the heroics teacher this year.”

“Really?” Nakamura said in surprise. “For some reason, I can’t really envision him in a classroom.”

“I didn’t even know he had his teaching license.” Fukukado said.

Shouta grit his teeth, “He doesn’t. That idiot doesn’t even have his teaching license and yet he had the audacity to suggest that Deku doesn’t deserve a place in the hero course simply because he’s quirkless.”}

"Let the roast session begin." Kaminari chuckles.

{There was a beat of silence before Fukukado stood up. “Where does he live?” She asked, rolling up her sleeves. “I swear, I just want to talk.”

Shouta growled, “Trust me, if it wouldn’t destabilize Japan, he would already be dead. Both Nedzu and I tried to convince him that Deku was more than capable of being a hero, but it was like he couldn’t even hear us. He kept pointing to the fact that Deku got hurt in the exercise as proof that he was weak, despite the fact that Bakugo was clearly *trying* to hurt him and the fact that it was his own damn responsibility as a teacher to make sure no one got hurt!”}

"And Young Kirishima or Young Tetsutetsu are the only first years that could walk away from such an attack unscathed." All Might points out.

"Exactly." Aizawa agrees.

{“That jerk!” Fukukado slammed her fist onto the bar, earning a halfhearted glare from the bartender. “Who does he think he is?”

"That's not even the best part." Shouta laughed humorlessly and took another drink. "Turns out, All Might first met Deku a year ago, I think around the time he reached out to us. All Might had just saved the kid from a villain and Deku took the chance to ask if he could be a hero even though he was quirkless."

Fukukado's face twisted in sympathy, "Until he met us, no one had ever encouraged his dream. He was probably desperate for any positive reinforcement at that point."}

"Yeah." Izuku admits sadly. His friends are quick to offer their support.

{Nakamura nodded, "Of course, he'd ask the number one hero for encouragement, All Might is always encouraging kids to chase their dreams in interviews, telling them to reach for the stars."

Shouta shook his head, "Apparently, he doesn't live up to his own hype. That idiot thought that the *kindest* thing he could do for this child, who I'll remind you had just been through a highly traumatic experience, was to violently crush his dreams. Even if he didn't know about the bullying, he should have at least had more tact than to tell the kid to his face that he could never be a hero."}

"Never meet your heroes." Shigaraki huffs.

{"Seriously?" Nakamura scoffed. "Did All Might even ask if the kid had any skills or did he just hear the word *quirkless* and write him off?"

"I'm pretty sure it was the second one." Shouta said. "He admitted that Deku's smart, but tried insisting that it'd be far too dangerous for him in the hero course. It was ridiculous!" He shook his head. "Thankfully Nedzu stood up to him. He made it clear that Deku was in the hero course and that fact wasn't going to change, but we're going to have to keep an eye on them and make sure All Might doesn't try to crush Deku's spirit *again.* " He sighed. "After the life that kid's had, I'm not sure how much more he can take."}

"Having friends raises the tolerance levels." Izuku mumbles.

"Tolerance levels?" Todoroki asks.

"For bullshit." Midoriya answers. Todoroki nods while Iida sighs.

{Fukukado put her hand on Shouta's shoulder, "That sucks."

Shouta nodded numbly.

"Dang it!" Nakamura scowled as he looked at his phone. "I'm so sorry Eraser. My agency just texted me and they need me to come tonight and cover another guy's patrol cause he got sick. Are you gonna be ok?"

Shouta shrugged and Fukukado draped her arm over his shoulders, "Don't worry Brave, I'll take *good care* of Eraser here."}

"Hey that's my Husband you're flirting with." Mic teases.

"For now." Joke giggles back at him.

"This is a new kind of hell." Aizawa groans setting off laughter in his 'love interests'.

{Nakamura snorted, "Now I'm even *more* concerned." He shook his head and waved goodbye. "Good luck Eraser. Don't leave any traceable evidence when you kill All Might!"}

"Do heroes really joke about murder this often?" Toga giggles.

{Fukukado laughed and Shouta scowled as Nakamura left. When he was gone Fukukado looked at Shouta, "How are you holding up?"

Shouta let out a puff of air, "I don't know." He said honestly. "I'm angry, but part of me knows I'm probably blowing things out of proportion because I'm tired. So I either need to punch All Might or sleep. Maybe both."

Fukukado chuckled and nodded, "Yeah, I get that. Maybe you can dream about punching All Might, that way you can kill two birds with one stone!"}

"Sounds good to me." Shinsou snarks.

{Shouta scoffed, "Yeah, wouldn't that be great? But is it really satisfying if I'm not punching his actual face?"

Fukukado laughed again, then her expression turned soft, "It's understandable Eraser." She said. "You're allowed to be angry right now. Deku is more than just a student to you, he's your friend, and I know you see him as a son." Shouta scowled at that,

but Fukukado simply flicked him on the nose and continued. “Don’t even try to deny it Eraser.” She stared at him in mock seriousness. “I see everything.”}

"Sure you do." Brave snorted.

{That made Shouta roll his eyes and Fukukado only managed to maintain her expression for a few seconds before she burst out laughing.

“No, but seriously.” She wheezed as she finally calmed down. “You’re allowed to feel hurt.”

Shouta sighed, “It’s irrational.” he said. “Being hurt and angry doesn’t help anything, it just makes you sloppy and makes you make stupid mistakes.”

Fukukado hit him over the head, “Stop that! Emotions are *not* irrational Eraser. Yeah, if anger is the only thing you’re focused on then you’re gonna have a hard time, but as long as we keep things in perspective, emotions can make life more interesting and satisfying.” She looked at him softly. “You’re angry because you care Eraser, and that’s a very good thing.”}

"Yeah!"
"What she said!"
"We care too!"

{Shouta shrugged, “I don’t know. Doesn’t mean I have to like it.”

Fukukado laughed at him and patted his back, “So, are you gonna be ok?”

He sighed, “We’ll have to see tomorrow. I still might decide to kill either Bakugo or All Might as soon as I see their stupid faces.”

She chuckled, “If you get arrested, I’ll make sure to feed your cats.”}

"Thanks." Aizawa deadpans.

"Anytime." Joke snickers.

{Shouta glared at her halfheartedly as she stood, but she just stuck her tongue out at him.

“Come on Eraser, let’s get you home.” she said. “Tomorrow’s

gonna be another long day.”

Shouta sighed, but finished his drink and paid. He didn’t even tell her to go away as she walked him home, talking his ear off about her students and their first day. She had a second-year class this year, apparently, so she was having to make sure they didn’t get too big for their britches now that they were no longer at the bottom of the totem pole. He just nodded along, occasionally humming or giving one or two-word answers when she asked a question, oddly content to listen to her meaningless chatter.}

"Oh, that other you might actually be falling for me." Joke realized.

{When they reached his apartment, Shouta unlocked the door and stepped inside, “Goodnight Joke.”

“Goodnight Eraser! Be sure to take good care of Deku for me.” She smiled softly and kissed him on the cheek. He stared at her for a long moment before she seemingly realized what she’d just done, which made her blush and practically run down the stairs. Shouta’s mouth hung slightly open as he watched her leave, his hand still frozen on the doorknob. When Fukukado had made it to the bottom, she glanced back and gave him a shy wave, which he returned numbly.

Shouta didn’t close the door until she was gone.}

"That was adorable!" Ashido squealed.

"I ship it!" Hagakure cheered.

"But only in the story!" Momo scolds.

"Of course." Ashido defends scandalized.

"Shipping people you actually know is..." Hagakure pauses looking for the right word.

"Inappropriate, kero." Tsu informs.

"Exactly." Uraraka gives a pointed look to each girl.

"Now that we've clarified that," Jiro interrupts "the next chapter is starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Overhaul approaches Mastermind.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Threat

{“So let me get this straight,” Izuku said tersely, “you want me to *join* your little yakuza, rather than have me in a consulting role as was the *agreement* when I showed up here.”}

"This is going to go well." Dabi drawls sarcastically.

{Overhaul simply looked unimpressed, “You’ve done a few impressive things in your short career,” he said, scratching at his wrist, “But with the recent defeat of All for One, villains will be looking for a leader to fill that vacuum of power. Your actions strike fear into people’s hearts, but you have no vision. No plan for society beyond making a quick buck. I have a plan and a vision of the world without the infection of quirks. A vision you no doubt agree with, being quirkless yourself if the rumors are true.” He clenched his fist. “Put yourself under me, and I’ll show you how well I can use you.”}

"Thanks but if I wanted to be manipulated I'd go back to middle school." Izuku remarks dryly.

"Damn, Midoriya." Shinsou says slightly impressed.

"The sass on you is amazing." Uraraka grins.

{“I think you deliberately misunderstand me, Overhaul,” Izuku grits his teeth, “I have no intention to join any group, nor do I

particularly care what happens to *society*, as you put it. I'm not even trying to be the leader of the underground! I am more than happy to let you or Shigaraki or whoever the hell else has the desire for the throne take it. What *I* value is having the freedom and power to do what I want when I want to and that sometimes means working with rival groups, so joining any organization would be counterproductive to my goals."}

"I can work with that." Shigaraki agrees.

"It's about respect and ass doesn't have any." Dabi snarks.

"I mean he put his boss into a coma!" Twice cries out "**The guy who *raised* him.**"

{He leaned forward, "And as for the issue of quirks, don't presume that you know what I want. Quirks are tools, nothing more, nothing less. I don't hate them or see them as an *infection* that needs to be eradicated, unlike you. What I do hate, though, are people who act like the world belongs to them, simply because they have a powerful quirk. In other words, Overhaul, I hate people like you." Izuku stood up, and walked toward the door, fingering his throwing knives and getting out of the range of Overhaul's quirk, "So, no. I will not be joining your yakuza, and this meeting is over."}

"Damn straight!"
"Fuck off, Overbitch!"
"Just let the kid walk away."

{Chronostatis tried to follow Mastermind as he left without being dismissed, but Overhaul simply held up a hand, "Don't worry, Chrono. I have ways to convince him." He glared at the door where Mastermind had disappeared, "Find out everything you can about Mastermind. He will be my disciple soon enough."}

"That *monster* is gonna do something awful." Uraraka pouts.

{Inko walked home carrying a bag of groceries in each hand. Normally, she wouldn't go to the store so late, but they were out of milk and she'd had a late shift at work, so here she was, walking back to the apartment an hour after dark. Hopefully, Izuku would be home by the time she got there. He had been spending a lot more time out with his friends lately which made her really happy, even though she hadn't met any of them yet.

Lately, he'd even been texting a boy named Shouto almost constantly, something Inko had never seen him do before, not even with Katsuki. Maybe she should ask what Shouto's favorite food was and have Izuku invite him to dinner? Maybe Himiko or Tomura would even join them! It would be nice to finally have faces to put to the names. All she knew about them so far was that Shouto was sweet, Himiko was high energy and Tomura was a little *too* into video games.}

"The world does not deserve Mamadoriya." Toga says with fake seriousness.

"Did the hero brats come up with that?" Dabi asks.

"Yeah, isn't it cute!" Toga cheers.

"It's fine." Dabi rolls his eyes suppressing a smile.

{Maybe she should ask Izuku when their birthdays were? They could shop. For the perfect gifts together, maybe even make a day of it! It would be the perfect excuse to hang out with her son now that he was finally thriving and out of the weird depression that had taken hold of him for a few months almost a year ago.

Inko couldn't help but be proud of her son and how he was finally living his best life because he gave up on that impossible dream. She had always done her best to discourage him from being a hero because it just wasn't a realistic dream for someone quirkless and she didn't want him to be disappointed. Above all, Inko just wanted Izuku to be safe, and that included him not trying to face down villains who were so much more powerful than he could ever hope to be. Inko didn't know what she would do if Izuku ever got hurt. After Hisashi's work transferred him shortly after Izuku's fourth birthday and his quirkless diagnosis, her baby was all she had. It was important that he stayed safe!}

"That's a little possessive." Hound Dog remarks. "I'd like to interview the woman."

"I'll set up a meeting." Nedzu assures.

{She knew that it had hurt him when he finally came to terms with the fact that his dream was impossible, but he got past it and now look! Izuku had friends now and he was so much happier than he had ever been while he was still trying to be a hero. And now that Izuku was finally happy, that meant that Inko could be

too!}

"She's gonna be so disappointed." Izuku winced.

{Suddenly, Inko felt a rough hand on her collar and she cried out as she was yanked backward into an alley. She tried to run but was suddenly hit by a wave of dizziness and nausea and it was all she could do to stay on her feet.

“Give me your money!”}

"Wait that's..." Mirio says "Oh, those poor fools."

{“Ok!” She cried, dropping her groceries and taking out her wallet. What with both the darkness and the dizziness, she couldn’t see her attackers clearly, but it looked like they all had bird mutation-type quirks. No wonder they turned to mugging, it had always been difficult for obvious mutation types to find good jobs.}

Dark Shadow wraps around Shoji and Koda to pull them a little closer to Tokoyami while growling at the screen.

{“Alright,” a bored-sounding voice said, “let’s finish this up.”

Inko flinched back as a hand reached for her, but the hand grabbed her anyway and suddenly she was engulfed in red hot pain. Inko didn’t know how long she was in pain, but then it was over. She briefly realized she’d collapsed at some point and could hear her attackers’ footsteps retreating. Once they were gone and she’d recovered a little, she felt around for her purse and grabbed her cell phone, which was miraculously still there.

“Hello, police?”}

"Did Overhaul just...?" Uraraka couldn't finish as she glanced at Midoriya, seeing him grinding his teeth and gripping his armrests tight enough to crack them.

{“Mom?” Izuku cried out as he saw his mom sitting in the back of an ambulance talking to a police officer as a paramedic looked at her, “Mom, what happened?”

“I’m fine, Izuku.” Inko said. “The paramedics say I’m better than normal. Even my old root canal somehow fixed itself up.”}

"That's how he *reset* Eri." Kirishima growls. As the only member of the Bakusquad that was a part of the Raid, the others don't comment on his anger.

{Izuku paused, “What happened?” he asked lowly.

“Midoriya? I’m Officer Sansa. Your mother appears to have been mugged,” an officer with a cat head said, “although we’re not sure what their motivations were. All her cards and cash are still in her wallet. We think they might simply enjoy causing pain since one of their quirks seems to be causing an immense amount of pain without permanent damage.”}

"Mastermind is *right there.* " Tsukauchi groans.

{Izuku was practically vibrating with rage at this point, “What did they do to you, Mom?”

Inko shook her head, “One of them just touched me and everything kind of exploded in pain for a minute or two until everything was fine again and they left. I'm fine Izuku!”}

"That didn't sound fine." Mei huffed.

{Izuku did not think that this situation *was fine* by any stretch of the imagination. He didn’t care how long it took, he thought as he started to run his hands through his mother’s hair to comfort her, he would track down the thugs that hurt her and make them pay.}

"I'm tempted to start singing 'Dumb Ways To Die' again." Kaminari mentions.

"The room is *so* not in the mood for it." Ashido nods.

{“Midoriya-san,” Officer Sansa asked, “can you give us any physical descriptions of your attackers?”

Izuku perked up as Inko shook her head, “It was dark and one of them had a quirk that made me really dizzy. The only thing I noticed was that they all had bird mutation quirks, so I assume they’re related.”

Izuku stilled. Bird mutation types, or just bird masks? A dizziness quirk, or a drunkenness quirk? A quirk that caused immense pain, or a quirk that was able to disassemble and reassemble matter to

the point that even a decades-old root canal was suddenly gone to the point that it seemed that it'd never been there?}

"Whelp, Overhaul is dead." Ojirou comments.

"I think we already knew that." Hagakure giggles nervously.

{Izuku wrapped his arms around his mom as she finally broke down and started to cry. This wasn't a mugging, this was a threat. *Be careful, I know what's important to you and I'm not afraid to kill to get what I want.*

Izuku's eyes took on an intimidating fire. Overhaul had just made a huge mistake.}

Izuku clears his throat drawing the attention of the whole room. "I just need to say, that as long as he doesn't do anything to Eri, I approve of whatever Mastermind does next."

"Understandable."
"Agreed."
"Dude, same."
"That's fair."
"Think the League will help him?"
"Hope it's bloody."
"Will it be just Overhaul or the whole yakuza?"
"Everybody, the next chapter's starting!"

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:TGG Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Viridian's back, baby!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Return

{Izuku squinted in the darkness of his room as he slowly switched between different camera feeds. He was feeling more confident in his hacking abilities ever since he completed his programming class, so instead of just looking up hacking videos on YouTube like he normally did during his vigilante time, Izuku decided to try hacking into some security cameras. It had taken just over half an hour to make his way into the system, but that was partially because he had to set everything up so that he wouldn't get caught. If the police figured out that he was Viridian, then they'd prevent him from going out on the streets when he got better and that would mess up all of Izuku's plans, so he needed to make sure the hack was untraceable to hide his identity.}

"How did he figure that out so fast?" Midnight asks impressed.

"Yeah, I know Cheat code can hack too, but that took months didn't it?" Mic agreed.

"It never gave us a solid timeline so we can't know how long it took." Aizawa states.

{He was kind of worried that he would have to hack into each camera individually, but once he'd gained access to the city's security system, it was pretty easy to just switch cameras around the city. He obviously didn't have access to privately owned

cameras like the one's stores put in, but baby steps. Izuku wasn't really planning to do anything besides get into the system, honestly, but as he was getting some practice switching between cameras, he saw a woman get roughly pulled into an alley and he couldn't just do nothing!}

"You just wouldn't be you if you ignored it." Uraraka smiles.

{It was probably the adrenaline combined with the fact that he'd already made his computer untraceable that let him hack into the hero comm link so fast. He put in his headphones, grateful that they had a mic attached, and quickly double-checked where the issue was. What hero was the closest?}

"Place your bets!" Ashido cheers.

"What are the chances?" Midnight teases. Aizawa rolls his eyes at the antics around him.

{Shouta scanned the streets below him, searching for any signs of the drug dealers he was supposed to be catching, only to come up empty. After Hamasaki's capture and subsequent disappearance, most of the larger dealers had gone to ground. The only ones that Shouta had been able to find were small fry, but he already knew they wouldn't be of any help to his investigation.}

"That's frustrating." Aizawa grumbles.

{It also didn't help that he'd been distracted recently. It had been weeks now, and it was looking more and more like Viridian wasn't coming back. Shouta knew that the problem child wasn't one of his students, so he didn't *technically* have any responsibility for the kid, but it still felt like he'd failed, or like he should have done more to help him. If only he'd realized that the kid was suicidal earlier, he might have been able to…}

"No!"
"Don't do that to yourself!"
"He's okay!"

{He was startled out of his thoughts by a soft click in his ear that indicated that his comm link had opened, followed by silence. Shouta frowned. He was an independent hero, so the only people who would normally talk to him over comms would be the police or sometimes other heroes requesting backup, but it would be

nice if they'd actually talk to him! He could hear someone breathing on the other end, so he knew it wasn't just his imagination, but who was it and what did they need?}

"That would be kinda annoying." Kaminari comments.

{"Hello?" Shouta couldn't help the annoyance that found its way into his voice. "I can hear you breathing, stop wasting my time."

There was silence for another long moment before a familiar young voice blurted out, "Imagine I'm throwing a marble."}

Snort
"Hahaha!"
"Why?"
"Really!?"
Wheeze

{Shouta felt himself melt from sheer relief, "Viridian? Is that you?"

He hadn't even realized how much tension he'd been holding until he heard the kid's voice. The kid was alive. He was alright. He was alive.}

"I was tense and knew the kid was alright." Hawks chuckles.

"That's called empathy bird-brain." Mirko teases.

{Izuku was trying not to panic. When he'd decided to hack into the hero comms, he hadn't thought of what he was going to say! Eraserhead was the closest hero to the alleyway he'd seen, but if Eraser suddenly heard a random voice in his ear, he would freak out and think it was a villain! Izuku wasn't supposed to have access to the comm link!}

"I mean, fair." Dabi huffs.

{Apparently, it was at that moment that Izuku's brain apparently decided that filters were overrated because all that he could think to blurt out was something about marbles since that was how he normally got heroes' attention when he was out on the street. Eraser probably thought he was a complete idiot and was probably really annoyed with him for wasting his time and hacking into the comm link, but at least it had worked...right?

Eraser had sounded oddly relieved when he said Izuku's vigilante name, probably because it confirmed that a villain hadn't somehow gotten access to the comm link.}

"Sure, yeah, that's totally why." Monoma drawls.

{"I'm so sorry, Eraserhead, I know that I shouldn't have hacked into the comm link and I'm really sorry for wasting your time, oh, and for punching you in the face that one time, and…"}

"I forgot about the punch for a while there." Shigaraki snorts.

{Eraser cut off his rambling apology, "It's fine, kid. Are you ok?"

Izuku frowned in confusion, "Yes? Why wouldn't I be ok?"}

"Oh my lord, this kid." Rock Lock groans.

{There was a beat of silence before Eraser spoke again, "I thought that maybe…"}

"Not the time." Mic stresses.

{Izuku suddenly remembered why he'd hacked into the comm link in the first place, "There's a shady guy that pulled a woman into the alley behind the boutique on Lake Street! Oh no! I'm so sorry Eraserhead, you were saying something and I interrupted you and…"

Eraser just grunted in response, most likely already running to the alley, "Did you catch sight of the guy's quirk?"

"Um," Izuku thought back to the footage and glanced at the camera in question again, no one had come out of the alley yet, "no. I didn't get a good look at him and he didn't have a mutant quirk, so it was a little difficult to tell what it was without seeing it in action. I'm sorry."}

"That's not your fault." Hagakure huffs.

{"It's fine, kid. Where have you been? We've been worried about you. You just disappeared without telling anyone."

Izuku didn't know how to feel about that. A part of him was amazed. People...actually *missed* him? *Him?* A quirkless Deku that was of no use to anyone? These people, heroes who *actually* mattered, cared about him enough to miss him? It felt oddly nice,

but it was quickly overridden by an insane sense of guilt. Stupid Deku. He'd just made life so much harder for the heroes and distracted them from saving people and, yes, he'd decided to not go out as a vigilante so that Mom wouldn't be worried, but instead he'd just caused so many problems for the heroes and he really was an idiot and why did he ever think that he could be useful? He should have just jumped when Kacchan told him to, but then Kacchan would get in trouble and…}

"RED ALERT! RED ALERT!"
"He's spiraling!"
"Damage control!"

{Shouta cursed himself as the silence over the comm link stretched on. He had been so relieved that Viridian was alive that he hadn't even been thinking! The kid was suicidal, which meant he probably felt like a burden on those around him, which meant that he would probably feel guilty for making them worry, which wouldn't make him any less suicidal. Shouta jumped onto another rooftop as he ran toward the alley the kid had mentioned. Viridian was most likely freaking out on the other end of the line and beating himself up for something that might not even be his fault. How was Shouta supposed to fix this?}

"At least you caught on quick." Midnight sighs.

"Unfortunately not the first person I've dealt with that had that mindset." Aizawa replies solemnly.

{"Not that you really had to let anyone know, you are your own person, after all." Shouta grimaced at how awkward he sounded. "Basically, we care about you, kid, and we missed you these last few weeks, but I'm glad you're ok...you *are* ok, aren't you?"

There was another moment of silence, then a sniff, "Y-you care?"}

"Oh, Viridian." Momo says softly.

{Shouta sighed in relief, "Yeah kid, but you didn't answer my question."

"Oh…" Viridian's voice trailed off, "um, it's kinda stupid...I just...you should probably hurry, it's been a while since they went in that alley."}

"Smooth." Shinsou remarks sarcastically.

{“I’m almost there.” Shouta decided it’d probably be best not to press the kid for answers. It sounded like he’d barely managed to avoid giving the kid a panic attack, so he didn’t want to risk that again. Right now, he just needed to make sure the kid could trust him.

He finally reached the alley, and the villain went down surprisingly easily. Then again, that probably had something to do with the way Shouta snuck up on him and pulled him away from the woman, restraining him completely before he even had the chance to fight back. The guy started growling and tried to fight back, but Shouta simply glared at him with enough force that he shut up. He was about to turn to comfort the victim when he heard muttering in his ear.

“...alright, that’s suspicious, but probably not a big deal...oh no! Yeah, that’s definitely not good. They probably have a quirk that silences alarms if the jewelry store didn’t even have their lights go on when that guy threw a rock through the window….”}

"Aw, he forgot." Hagakure coos.

"That shouldn't be cute." Ojirou chuckles.

{Shouta gave a small snort. The kid had forgotten to cut the comm link after Shouta took care of the situation, “What are you muttering about, Viridian?”

“Oh, Eraser, you’re still here! I’m sorry, that was probably really annoying, it’s just that there’s a robbery, but I think Amplifier’s closer, so I should call her. Bye!”}

"I'm happy he found a way to help from home." Amplifier grins.

{And with that, the kid was gone. Shouta shook his head and couldn’t help the small smile on his face as he turned to the victim. The kid was alive, at the very least, even if he wasn’t out on the streets. He was just about to call Tsukauchi when he froze.

How had the kid known where to find this crime? And how had he gained access to Shouta’s comm? He seemed to have a bird’s eye view of the robbery he was sending Amplifier to, so had he somehow managed to hack into the security cameras? He felt a little swell of pride. The kid really was pretty smart, wasn’t he?

He shook his head fondly as he connected to Tsukauchi, “Hey Tsukauchi, I’ve got a villain and victim ready for pick up on Lake Street. Oh, and by the way,” Shouta couldn’t help the huge grin that spread across his face, “Viridian’s back.”}

"Guess who back, back again~" Kaminari sings.

"Alright Viridian is back!" Hagakure cheers.

"More evidence Deku is brilliant!" Uraraka chimes in.

"Guys! Guys, I know we're all excited but Cheat Code is about to deal with more USJ bullshit." Jirou reminds.

"Oi! The chapters booting up!" Shigaraki calls out.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

The USJ continues to fight back.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Decisions

{“Midoriya?” Present Mic’s voice, much less exuberant than normal, brought him back to the present and Izuku looked over at Mei, who looked like she was about to throw up. How long had they been sitting there? “Are you and the other little listener ok? You went quiet there. And what was that about dust?”}

"Someone has been turned into it." Kaminari chokes out, remembering how this story left off.

{“Uh,” Izuku swallowed the bile that was starting to climb up his throat, “The, leader...his quirk...he just killed…it’s my fault…”}

"No, no, no, not your fault." Uraraka tries to reassure him.

{There was a panicked flurry of noise on the other end of the comm, but the white noise in Izuku’s brain was louder. He’d never seen someone *die* before. If it wasn’t for Izuku’s interference, would Shigaraki still have killed that guy? Probably not, so it was all Izuku’s fault that he was dead.}

"No it's not." Shigaraki scoffs incredulously.

{“Slow down, Young Midoriya.” All Might’s voice wasn’t quite the same as it was when he was in his hero form, but it still brought back enough memories of long hours in front of the computer to be slightly comforting. “Start from the beginning. First off, is

Eraserhead all right?”}

"*That's* an effect I'm proud of." All Might comments.

{“W-what?” Izuku looked at the screen helplessly. Even though it seemed like the world had stopped for him, the fight was still going. Eraserhead was still slowly being overwhelmed by the cannon fodder as Shigaraki and Kurogiri watched impassively as if they hadn’t just casually left a body in the middle of the plaza.}

"We're villains, what do you expect?" Shigaraki snarks.

{“Eraserhead is fine.” Mei reported, apparently recovering from the shock a little quicker than Izuku had been able to. “The villain killed one of his own men.”

“He killed him because of me, Mei-chan.” Izuku’s voice cracked. “That man is dead because of me.”

Mei looked at him, the emotions in her eyes swirling between pity, helplessness, and something else that Izuku couldn't' name, “I know, but they’re gonna kill a lot more people if we do nothing.”}

"But it's not his fault, kero." Tsu mentions.

"The middle of a crisis is hardly the time for that argument." Iida says gently.

{Izuku took a deep breath and let it out slowly before addressing the teachers and throwing himself into his analysis. He could deal with... *everything* later, “The leader’s name is Shigaraki. He has a disintegration quirk that seems to spread from wherever he touches. Most likely a five-point activation quirk, just like Uraraka’s gravity nullification. Unknown whether he can control the speed with which something turns to dust. The warp quirk user’s name is Kurogiri and he appears to be the right hand, also more mature than Shigaraki. All other villains are most likely hired muscle.”}

"He didn't notice the Nomu." Shoji whispers in horror.

"Let us hope that such an oversight does not prove fatal." Tokoyami Comforts.

{Izuku still didn’t want to use the guns that Nedzu had

mentioned, but he went into the defense system and started booting them up anyway. If Shigaraki was willing to kill so easily, Izuku had to be prepared. Mei was right, all he could worry about right now was making sure Shigaraki didn't kill anyone else.}

"Would you kill to save someone?" Todoroki asks hesitantly.

Izuku blinked at him, his eyes softening sadly "Only as a last resort if I can help it."

{"Mei-chan, you take over the mountain zone." Izuku said. "I need to focus on the plaza."

"Will do, Izu-kun!" Mei turned toward the screen and her eyes widened. "Oh my god!"}

Momo sighs.

{"What?" Izuku turned to check what was wrong, only to end up with Mei's hands over his eyes. "Mei-chan! What are you doing? I can't see!"}

"Mei, what the hell?" Shinsou asks.

"I don't know!" She freaks out a bit.

{"What's going on over there?" Powerloader demanded. "Kids!"

"We're fine, Powerloader-sensei!" Mei yelled. "It's just that Izu-Kun doesn't need to see that!"

"I literally just saw someone *die*, Mei-chan." Izuku grumbled. "What's worse than that?"}

"**Nothing.**"

{"Well, it's just that..." Mei's voice sounded embarrassed, "One of the girls in the mountain zone had a...costume malfunction..."

"I knew that costume was going to be a problem." Izuku grumbled, "Her quirk works through skin-exposure Mei-chan, it's not a big deal. If I promise not to look, can I have my eyes back?"}

"I wonder what other problems he just doesn't bring up?" Ojirou comments.

"Well, uh..." Hagakure gestures to herself.

{“Hatsume, please.” Present Mic sounded somewhat desperate. “Midoriya needs to help Shouta..”}

"Poor other me, I mean, Sho's important to me, but that guy *married* him." Mic says in concern.

{“Oh!” Mei snatched her hands back as if she’d just been burned, “I...I’m so sorry, I wasn’t thinking and…”

“Sometimes trauma is like that.” Hound Dog interrupted patiently. “Experiences like this make the brain want to cling to any sense of normalcy it can get. Honestly, you kids are first years and aren’t even in the hero course, you shouldn’t be going through *any* of this...”}

"Except you wouldn't know what was going on if they didn't." Monoma sighs.

{“If we weren’t involved, you still wouldn’t know about the attack.” Izuku said resolutely. “We’re fine. Crap, Shigaraki’s on the move.”

Izuku turned up the volume so he could hear Shigaraki’s muttering, “...24 seconds, then 20, then 17…”}

"That's creepy." Ashido shivers.

"He's about to go after sensei." Sero stresses.

{It took a moment for Izuku to make the connection, and when it did, he couldn’t help feeling like he’d somehow gotten caught in Todoroki’s ice quirk, “He’s figured out Eraserhead’s tell.”}

"Please dodge this time." Uraraka begs.

{Eraserhead tensed and jumped away from Shigaraki as he ran forward and Izuku sighed in relief, “I was worried for a second that Eraserhead had been too busy to see Shigaraki’s quirk in action, but he’s keeping his distance, so he’s safe for now.”}

"Oh wow, the killing your own man thing backfired. Who would have guessed?" Dabi states voice dripping with sarcasm.

{“Eraserhead prides himself on having good situational awareness.” Nedzu said. “He wouldn’t be such an effective hero if

he was unable to multitask.”}

"Thanks for the compliment." Aizawa deadpans.

"I'm only stating objective facts." Nedzu replies.

{“I’ve gotten almost all of the students out of the disaster zones.” Mei reported. “Most of them are heading toward the entrance, but a few are trying to make their way toward the plaza.”}

"Kachan and Todoroki." Izuku sighs.

"I wish I could argue." Todoroki shakes his head.

{“Get in their way, please, Miss Hatsume.” Nedzu ordered. “We need to keep the students away from the most dangerous villains as much as possible.”

“But…”

“Hatsume…” Powerloader said her name like it was a warning, which it probably was, although Izuku had no idea what the punishment for disobedience would be. Most likely no access to flammable materials for a week.}

"My babies!" Mei cries out in sorrow.

{“Fine, have it your way.” Mei huffed and started typing. Izuku glanced over to see Katsuki and Kirishima struggling to keep their feet as a mini-earthquake shook the path they were on. It wouldn’t hold them back for long, but he trusted Mei to keep them safe.}

"Man, I told you we needed to head for the entrance." Kirishima chided.

"It worked out didn't it?" Bakugo defends.

{Turning back to his own screen, Izuku stopped breathing as he realized that Shigaraki had stopped the cat-and-mouse game he’d been playing with Eraserhead and was now scratching his neck again. This couldn’t be good.}

"Good instincts." Twice compliments. **"Disaster incoming."**

{“Stupid cheater.” Shigaraki muttered. “If it wasn’t for the stupid extra player with the cheat codes, I could have taken Eraserhead

out easily! His quirk isn't good for long drawn out battles with big groups…"

"No...good hero…" Eraserhead panted and shot his capture weapon toward Shigaraki, "...is a...one trick pony."}

"Sho, you sound exhausted." Midnight worries.

"By that point, I was." Shota agrees.

{Kurogiri appeared beside Shigaraki and the capture-weapon disappeared harmlessly into a portal, only to reappear at Eraserhead's ankles. Eraserhead rolled away and his hair started floating. The portals disappeared, cutting the capture-weapon neatly in half as they closed. Izuku shivered slightly. If Kurogiri closed one of his portals while someone was halfway through...}

"We almost got All Might that way." Shigaraki gripes.

{"Would you like me to take care of him?" Kurogiri asked.

Shigaraki stopped scratching his neck and grinned widely enough that Izuku could see the expression behind the hand on his face, "No. Eraserhead might be cool, but he doesn't know that I'm not the final boss here! Nomu!"}

"Fuck!"
"No!"
"Stop!"

{Izuku didn't know how he'd missed the giant shadow that slammed Eraserhead into the ground, but if he'd thought about it at all, he would have assumed that the bird villain with an exposed brain was just another one of the thugs Shigaraki had hired.}

"How weird is our world that someone wouldn't even blink at an exposed brain?" Sato shakes his head.

{He would have been wrong.

"What even is that thing?" Mei's voice raised in barely concealed panic and Izuku decided he didn't like it when she panicked. That was supposed to be *his* job.}

"Izu-Kun!" Mei gasps.

"Anxiety! I have anxiety!" Izuku defends.

{“I...I don’t know.” Izuku stalled for a moment, ignoring the teachers' barrage of questions on the other end of the comm as he analyzed the villain. “Everyone shut up!”}

"Did the Green Bean just tell us to shut up?" Midnight clutches her heart dramatically.

"It's a stressful situation." Mic defends him.

"Can we not crack jokes right now?" Aizawa demands.

"And here I thought I was the only one that used humor to cope." Joke chimed in.

"If only." Aizawa groans.

{“Eraserhead is still alive.” At least, Izuku hoped he was, but he could have sworn he’d seen the hero moving around a little, even after whatever that *thing* was had stopped beating him, “But the students are on their own now. He’s not going to be able to fight anyone with those injuries. As for what attacked him...well, it doesn’t seem human. It has a strength aspect to its quirk, definitely, but it also seems to have some sort of bird mutation, which should normally come with more fragile bones and diminished physical strength that this villain obviously hasn’t shown signs of…”}

"*That's* why you’re so much more careful sparring with Tokoyami." Uraraka comments.

"You noticed that?" Izuku questions.

"It's an admirable accommodation." Iida adds.

{Izuku trailed off as Shigaraki started speaking again. *Bragging*, his brain corrected.

“What do you think of him?” Shigaraki said gleefully. “He’s the bioengineered anti-symbol of peace, but you can call him Nomu. He’s got his own set of cheat codes to beat the big boss!”

“Bioengineered anti-symbol of peace?” Mei repeated, horrified. “That thing was invented? That’s somebody’s *baby?!”*}

"How is it worse when she puts it like that?" Jiro scowls.

{“Their backup is going to be coming soon. Between the student that escaped and that noob with the cheat codes, it’s game over.” Shigaraki growled and brought his hand up to start scratching his neck again, only to freeze right before he made contact. “How about we leave the symbol of peace a present to break his pride when he gets here!”}

"Kero." Tsu croaks softly.

{He lunged toward Eraserhead, but Izuku was already ready. He shot every weapon he could think of at the space between Shigaraki and the hero, but apparently, Kurogiri was already expecting his attack. Each of the rockets, bullets, and other projectiles he’s launched were effortlessly redirected upwards, harmlessly exploding near the ceiling. Portions of the dome shattered from the shrapnel and bullets, and the remaining thugs ran for cover as shards started raining down, but even falling glass wasn’t enough to stop Shigaraki from grabbing Eraserhead’s face just like he had grabbed the blocker earlier. Mei and Izuku both held their breath as all five of Shigaraki’s fingers made contact.}

"Nonononono."
"Damnit, damnit, damnit."
"Sensei!"

{Nothing happened.}

"Oh, thank fuck."
Sob
"Sensei."

{“You really are so cool, Eraserhead.” Shigaraki grinned. At least he seemed to respect Eraserhead as an opponent, not that that would be enough to keep him alive. “Nomu!”

Izuku had already launched another net at the Nomu, hoping to cancel his quirk in time to soften the blow, making sure to shoot a rocket at Kurogiri at the same time in an attempt to distract him. The half-baked plan worked and the net wrapped around the monster, but even with the net canceling his quirk, the Nomu still slammed Eraserhead's face into the concrete with an audible crack and the hero finally went completely limp. Shigaraki simply huffed and disintegrated the net like it was nothing before turning his attention back toward the now unconscious Eraserhead.}

"You leave him alone!"
"Stop!"
"Sensei, please."

{“How far out are you guys?” Izuku’s brain whirled with a million plans as he addressed the heroes.

“About five minutes.” Nedzu said. “But All Might could get there in two if…”

“Do it.” Izuku ordered. “Power up and get over there. I’ll distract them.”}

"You'll what now!?" Aizawa scolds.

{“Izu-Kun,” Mei warned, “don’t you dare…”

“Young Midoriya, I really must insist…” All Might’s voice overlapped Mei’s and the other heroes as they tried to stop him, but Izuku resolutely ignored them as he connected to the PA system.

Shigaraki froze with his hand only inches away from Eraserhead’s face as Izuku’s voice, slightly warped from both the technology and the acoustics of the building, echoed around the USJ.

“Hello!” He took a deep breath and forced a shaky smile onto his face in a poor attempt to both assure Mei and to make himself sound more confident, “You seem to be having a little trouble.”}

"Problem Child!"
"You idiot!"
"Why?"
"This can only go well."
"Desperation is a virulent cocktail."
"I hate cliffhangers."
"Everyone pipe down!"
"Shadows, shadows, shadows!"

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

The UA exercise begins!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Exercise

{It seemed weird that a huge defining moment of her life would take place in a school nurse's office, but Kyoka had to get One for All somewhere and she guessed that Recovery Girls' office was better than a half-cleaned training beach.}

Izuku pouts. "Hey."

"Really, at the trash beach?" Jiro asks.

"I finished cleaning it first!" Izuku defends.

{It was ridiculously early, but the exercise started at noon and the villains were supposed to arrive around sunrise so that they had time to go over the rules one final time and enter the test city a few hours before the hero students did. The company providing the civilians for the exercise had apparently arrived yesterday and had been setting things up in the city since last night.}

"Add a dormitory for guests." Nedzu mumbles to himself.

{Kyoka was already wearing her villain outfit and had everything she was allowed to bring to the exercise, mostly stuff like flashlights and her pepper spray that had somehow gotten approved, so all that was left was to get her quirk and she'd be ready.}

"A two-hundred-year-old secret quirk, but that's all." Gran snarks.

{She wasn't quite sure when her thoughts had shifted from *if* to *when* she got One for All, but it must have happened at some point because here she was, ready to make a decision that would impact the rest of her life.

Dad would be so proud.}

"Your dad seems fun." Izuku chuckles.

{The door opened and All Might walked in, flanked on either side by Recovery Girl and Gran Torino. If it hadn't worked out so well, Kyoka would have been tempted to cringe at the audacity of seeking out her mentor's mentor to train her just because she didn't like the way All Might suggested, but at the end of the day, Gran's vision of what training for One for All should look like meshed a lot better with her fighting style than All Might's point and hit strategy. The last few weeks had been spent cleaning the beach as they had originally planned, but also meditating, studying, and listening to One for All as often as she could so that she was ready for today.}

"If only I met him sooner." Izuku laments.

"You might have a few less scars." Todoroki says the tiniest hint of guilt.

"Uh-uh, no, I did this myself, don't blame yourself for it." Izuku chides gently.

{"This is a great responsibility, young Jiro." All Might said solemnly. "A sacred torch that has been passed down for generations."

Recovery Girl hit All Might in the knees with her cane. "Don't scare her off before she's even gotten the quirk, you nitwit!"

"It *is* a sacred responsibility." Gran Torino acknowledged. "But at the end of the day, I've known the holders of this quirk for decades and it has been passed through some of the greatest heroes I know. Try to welcome it like an old friend, if you can."

Kyoka swallowed dryly and nodded, "Ok, I'm ready."

All Might smiled and plucked a hair from his head, "Eat this!"}

"That's how the quirk is transferred!" Jiro balks.

"Yep!" Izuku chirps. "Though any DNA sample would work."

"Then my hair! I've accidentally swallowed my own hair before, it's awful!" Jiro cringes.

"Well you could do spit, or sweat, or blood, or..." Izuku pause to let her fill in the blank.

"Fuck, no, hair is fine." She quickly corrects. Silent displays of horror or disgust fill the room at the implications.

"I wonder if any of the transfers took place during..." Mineta is cut off by a popcorn bucket being slammed over his head.

//

{Izuku swallowed as he stared up at the massive gates of UA, “We...were finally here.”

“Yeah.” Hitoshi breathed. “And soon we’re gonna be back as students.”

They were both dressed in the villain outfits they’d bought and Izuku was floored by how well everything had come together. They’d found armored shirts that were meant for people with destructive quirks so they had at least some measure of protection, but they’d also found a lot of other things, like climbing harnesses that would allow them to rappel down buildings or hide up off the ground in a pinch. For two bullied kids, Hitoshi thought they looked pretty cool.}

"You do!"
"Badass!"
"I have *chills*."

{Izuku nodded in awe, “I know we’ve been preparing for this for weeks now, but still, it doesn’t…”

“Feel real?” Hitoshi chuckled, “Yeah, I get it. But we’ve got all your plans and we’re ready for this, aren’t we?”

Izuku’s expression hardened in determination, “Right. We’re ready. Let’s do this.”}

"You got this!"

"Have fun boys!"
"Fuck 'em up!"

{The entire school was basically a maze and if the two of them hadn't spent the last week studying every last resource they could find on both UA and the heroes vs. villains exercise, Hitoshi wasn't sure they would have been able to find the auditorium at all. As it was, they just barely avoided taking a few wrong turns and arrived at the auditorium to find it almost empty with the exception of a few other fake villains wandering around in small groups and picking their seats. A few looked over at them as they came in, and Hitoshi made a note of who kept them in the corner of their eye after looking away. They'd have to watch out for those ones.}

"It hasn't even started and their scare tactics are working." Toga squeals, bouncing in her seat.

{Hitoshi didn't pay them too much mind, however, considering that his eyes were immediately drawn to the girl sitting by herself about halfway toward the back of the room.

Izuku smiled as he recognized her too, "Jiro! You made it!"

She jumped at Izuku's shout, her earphones twitching slightly before she relaxed and gave them a cocky grin "Hey, what a nice surprise. I thought you two would have gotten lost before you made it to the front gate."}

"It looks like One for All made hearing even *more* sensitive." Jiro groans.

{Hitoshi rolled his eyes, "Very funny. What about you? This place is like a maze. How did you find this room?"

"You must have been a part of the exercise before, right?" Izuku asked. "That's how you knew where to go!"

"Nah, nothing that fancy." Jiro shook her head. "I was hanging out with my mentor before this and he walked me down."

Izuku's eyes widened hungrily, "Mentor? Who…?"}

"Place your bets!" Kaminari cheers.

"How long will it take for Midoriya to figure it out!?" Ashido adds.

{“Your outfits look good.” Jiro interrupted. “I guess you ended up finding all the pieces you needed to finish them.”

“Oh, uh, yeah. And more, honestly…” Hitoshi glanced down at his outfit. “Is that your villain outfit? Or is it just what you pulled out of your closet this morning?”}

"Both." Jiro snorts.

{“Meh,” Jiro shrugged, “it’s a little bit of both, not gonna lie.”

She was wearing baggy cargo pants, just like he and Izuku were, but she’d paired hers with combat boots that laced all the way up above her knees and a variety of belts hanging around her waist. Up top, she’d paired a dark grey tank top with a black half-shirt that was basically just sleeves with a high neckline to keep it in place.

In short, she looked like a badass and Hitoshi had to turn away so he wouldn’t stare too long, “Well, uh, it looks alright for something you just threw together last minute.”}

"Is that flirting?" Kaminari asks.

Ashido grins "It totally is.

{“We should probably go sit down…” Izuku said, pointing to the crowds of people wandering in, small groups being led by various pro-heroes who must have found them wandering around the halls of UA, “It looks like they’re starting to round up the stragglers.”

Jiro gave them a questioning look and Hitoshi rushed to explain, “Izuku wanted to sit in the back so we could watch everyone come in. The people who got here before us either did the exercise in previous years or did a lot of research just like we did.”

“They’re wild cards.” Izuku added. “They're probably not as useful as allies as the people who showed up without getting lost, but they could also cause problems we’re not expecting *because* they’re less prepared. I wanna see what we’re working with.”}

"Put those observational skills to good use." Midnight nods.

"It's only logical." Aizawa agrees.

{“While simultaneously hiding your own strength and weaknesses behind those masks of yours.” Jiro nodded. “Smart, but unnecessary. We’re fighting the heroes, not these guys.”}

The villains all bark out laughs at that.

{Izuku shook his head, “That's what they want you to think, but really, they've written the rules to make this just as much of a competition between the villains as it is a fight against the heroes.”

“It enhances the realism of the scenario. In real life, there’s just as much infighting as there is conflict between heroes and villains. Maybe even more.” Hitoshi explained. “So yeah. Once we get in there, it’s kinda every man for himself.”}

"Except for us." Mirio smiles.

{Jiro smirked, “So what I’m hearing is that there’s no hard feelings if I stab you two in the back?”

“Of course not.” Hitoshi smiled. “Because we’ll be the ones stabbing you in the back first.”

Jiro gave him a look, “Go, do your creepy recon or whatever, I’ll see you in the arena.”

Hitoshi lowered his voice and leaned in closer, “Not if we’re doing our jobs right.”}

"Well that was hot." Kaminari deadpans.

"Totally." Ashido nods.

{“Hitoshi, we gotta go.” Izuku’s eyes darted around and Hitoshi realized he’d already taken out his notebook and his hands were twitching like he was already trying to write all the thoughts and observations running through his head. “Oh yeah, uh, catch you later Jiro Good luck.”

Jiro nodded. “Right back at ya.”

The two of them silently made either way toward the back of the auditorium melting into the shadows as much as they could. Those of the new people who *did* see them either stared or

immediately looked away, which meant that their plan to be intimidating, or at the very least mysterious, was working well. As soon as they sat down, Izuku's pen immediately started flying across the pages of his notebook and Hitoshi got his out more slowly, but he was still mentally filing away how the other fake villains interacted with each other and what personality traits they could exploit later if they really needed to. The villains were definitely at a disadvantage in this exercise, but Izuku and he had lived their entire lives at a disadvantage so really, they were right in their comfort zone. And they were about to show everyone what they could do.}

"Trauma builds character." Dabi chuckles.

{Denki eyed the two guys in combat gear and swallowed, yeah, he was definitely going to be steering clear of those guys. Mom grinned as she elbowed him in the ribs, "What do you think Sparky? Isn't this gonna be fun?"

Denki gave a bright smile, "Yeah! It's gonna be great! His smile fell the moment that Mom looked away. It wasn't that he wasn't excited. It *was* going to be a lot of fun, but he was also kinda starting to freak out. Mom knew he wanted to be a hero, but she wasn't around a lot, so it had been a while since she'd actually seen him fight. He had to be good at combat though because that would be his only saving grace if he somehow bombed the academic portion of the UA entrance exam.}

"It was close." Kaminari shivered.

{He knew that other schools might take him, obviously, but Mom had been so proud when he'd said that he was shooting for UA and he just...he didn't want to disappoint her. Or himself, honestly. He'd be pretty bummed if he didn't make it in. Present Mic walked up onto the stage and Denki couldn't help grinning. He'd been the one and found him and mom when they'd gotten lost on the way to the auditorium. It had been long enough since she'd gone here that either they'd remodeled or she'd just forgotten her way around either was a possibility but Denki had been terrified that they were going to be late when Present Mic had finally found them wandering around the third floor and lead them and a whole bunch of others here just in time. He'd laughed and joked with them and the others they'd found for the entire time, so yeah, Denki was pretty sure he'd just discovered a new

favorite hero.}

"Thanks, I try." Mic grins.

{“Hello there listeners!” Mic yelled. “Welcome to our annual heroes vs. villains exercise at UA High School! Even though all of you are good people and some of you are even pro heroes IRL, this week, you get to embrace your dark side and become heroes to our students by playing the villains!!!”

There was an awkward pause and Denki was fairly certain they were supposed to cheer, but it was too late now, so... Denki just cheered emotionally and hoped it counted for something somehow.}

"One day." Mic says dreamily.

"Sure Zashi." Aizawa placates.

{“Love the enthusiasm.” Mic grumbled. “Alright let’s get back to it! The villains in this exercise, that’s you, are trying to achieve objectives. You should have gotten a list of these bad boys in the big stack of paperwork we gave you when your applications were approved. They’re gonna be things like steal this painting, kidnap this victim, you know, typically crimes that our students are gonna come across in the field. For each objective that you manage to hold onto for the whole week and escape with at the end, you’ll get some cold hard cash so try to go home with as many as possible. Just to keep things interesting you have to actually leave the city on the last day, though. No just stashing your objectives somewhere and raking in the cash, that doesn’t count.”}

"So there's two phases: acquisition and escape." Izuku mumbles sitting forward in interest.

{Denki wasn’t here for the money, but he wouldn't deny it would be nice to have a little extra cash. Mom made a good amount, obviously, but it was always different spending money that he’d earned himself and he wanted to help pay for UA somehow. Assuming he actually got in. That meant, though, that they were up against a lot of guys who were only in it for the money and would do what was necessary to get it. So that would be interesting.}

"Greed can be unending and corrosive." Tokoyami rumbles.

{“The heroes’ goal is to stop you.” Present Mic continued. “But that doesn’t mean that they don’t have other objectives too! They’ve got a list just like yours of things they can do for extra credit points, but these are things like finding lost children or doing a press interview. You know typical hero stuff! Now onto the fun part. Your weapons; you weren’t allowed to bring any in with you, except for your quirk obviously, but there will be some available inside the arena itself, it might require a little bit of work to get them. All of these are nonlethal paint rounds even if the knives have a special coating that will rub off to show a hit. So don’t worry about that when picking your weapons. You and the hero students will both have coms that link to the staff here at UA, so we’ll make the call for how much damage is lethal. Once you're dead you’re out of the game, obviously, but we do have activity rooms so it’s not gonna be too boring for you. Same if the heroes arrest you but there’s a grace period there. You’ll have 24 hours to escape before getting turned over to the teachers, so you better work quick ya dig?”}

"Prison break!" Toga cheers.

{Denki frowned. The heroes weren’t supposed to kill people, were they?}

Glances at Endeavour have the man tensing.

{“Alright, that’s the big stuff out of the way.” Present mic grinned. “Once we get into the city, you’ll have until noon until the heroes get here so if you have anything you don't wanna get caught doing, get it done quickly. Remember though that you’re not allowed to actually *grab* any of the objectives until the heroes are actually inside the city, ya got it?”}

"That sounds fair." Shoji comments.

{There was a quiet grumble of assent and Present Mic grinned, “Alright then, follow us to the buses, and let’s get on our way.”}

"And so it truly begins." Nedzu rubs his paws together in excitement.

{The minute they arrived at the gates, all the villains scattered in every direction. Izuku and Hitoshi ducked into a building just inside the gates and as soon as they found a room with a door that could actually close, Izuku dropped down cross-legged on the floor and pulled out his laptop.

Hitoshi took off his jacket and stuffed it into his backpack, “You’ll be reaching out through my comms, right?”

“As soon as I gain access, yeah.” Izuku nodded, not looking up from the screen. “The hero comms will obviously be able to communicate with each other, not just the teachers, so it’s probably just a setting that I'll be able to mess with once I hack into the system.”}

"That's a nice first step." Hawks comments.

{“It should be easier than hacking the main school, thankfully.” Hitoshi shrugged, taking off his combat pants and revealing the ripped jeans underneath. “From what I know of Nedzu’s personality, he’ll make it possible for people to hack in for exercises like this, just to see if anybody will be crazy enough to try it.”}

"But of course." Nedzu confirms.

{Izuku grinned, “I guess it’s a good thing that we’re a little crazy then.”}

"A little?" Uraraka teases.

{Hitoshi pulled on a hawks t-shirt over his armored undershirt and did a little spin, “How do I look?”

“Like a civilian.” Izuku nodded in satisfaction. “Good luck getting our weapons. I’ll call you when I get our comms up and running.”

Hitoshi left him to his hacking and hurried out onto the street.}

"He'll completely blend in." Kendo realizes.

"For now." Monoma scoffs.

Meanwhile...

"Hiding in plain sight?" Aizawa questions. "Excellent tactics."

"High praise coming from you." Midnight teases, earning herself an eye-roll.

Meanwhile...

"I look like one of the civilians." Shinsou smirks.

"It was your goal to be mostly unknown was it not?" Iida asks.

"Yep! And it's working!" Izuku buzzes.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP… Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Katsuki meets with Hound Dog

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro…

Therapy

"Yo, not cool!" Kaminari cries out.

"Look I know I'm a gossip but watching a therapy session is a *huge* violation of privacy!" Ashido agrees.

"Shut up so we can get it over with." Bakugo says tensely.

{"Hey Bakugo!" Kirishima came up to him after English. "Do you want to hang out with us during free period today?"

"Yeah right, shitty hair, like I'd ever hang out with you." Katsuki scoffed. "Even if I wanted to, I've got shit to do."

Kirishima smiled and shrugged, "It was worth a try. Hey Ashido, wait up!"}

"He has the patience of a saint." Izuku chuckles.

"And you don't." Shinsou raises an eyebrow at him.

{Katsuiki rolled his eyes as he watched Kirishima leave with those other high-energy extras he'd eaten lunch with the first day. They probably wouldn't even want to hang out with him if they knew he had to go to fucking *therapy* during free period today. He

scowled. Stupid Deku. If it weren't for him, Katsuki could be sleeping or doing literally anything else right now rather than stomping his way toward some stupid shrink's office.}

"Again it's not a question of *if* we'll need therapy, but a question of *when*." Sero corrects.

{The door was plain, tucked away in a less-trafficked part of UA, and had Hound Dog written on a metal plate in the center. What kind of hero name was *Hound Dog* anyway? He considered straight-up blowing the door off its hinges, but considering he was supposedly there for anger management, that probably wouldn't go over too well. He settled for pounding on the door instead.}

"I would find an anger management kid blowing down my door secretly hilarious." Hound Dog mentions.

{"Come in!"

Katsuki opened the door and looked around until he caught sight of Hound Dog standing by his desk. Ok, he could admit the guy looked pretty badass, but that still didn't mean he had to like him.}

"It is a shame Bakugo does not voice his likes as vehemently as he does his dislikes." Iida complains.

{"Hey," Hound Dog said. "You must be Bakugo."

Katsuki scowled, "What's it you, mutt?"

Hound Dog let out a barking laugh, "Yeah, they warned me about you. Why don't you close the door and sit down? Or would you rather sit there catching flies?"}

"Yeah, they'll get along great." Dabi snorts.

{Katuski slammed the door and stalked over to the couch, throwing himself down heavily. The soft material was probably meant to make him feel comfortable or peaceful or something, but jokes on them. Katsuki didn't *do* soft.}

"But soft is so comfy." Toga whines sarcastically.

{They sat silently for a minute as Hound Dog typed something

into his computer. Katsuki tried to get comfortable, but he kept sinking into the couch, so he ended up just clenching and unclenching his fists until he couldn't take being ignored any longer.

"So what?" Katsuki sneered. "You want me to fucking talk about my *feelings?"*

Hound Dog shrugged, "I want to talk about your life, and eventually, sure, your feelings, but this visit is for me to get to know you more than anything else."}

"As a first meeting always is." Hound Dog assures.

{"Why do you even have to get to know me?" Katsuki scowled. "You're just gonna try to change me anyway, so why do you need to know who I am?"

Hound Dog tilted his head slightly, "What do you mean?'

Katsuki scoffed, "You fucking know what I mean. You're trying to make me into some vanilla cookie-cutter weakling. You don't really care about what I want, you just want me to be *nice.* " He glared at Hound Dog. "I don't do *nice."*}

"That's not what therapy is for." Ojirou denies.

{Hound Dog nodded, "You're afraid we're trying to make you into something you're not."

"I'm not scared!" Katsuki yelled. "And you are trying to make me into something I'm not. I have to act exactly how you want me to or else you'll kick me out! You're trying to get rid of my entire fucking personality!"

"Ah." Hound Dog grinned. "So you see yourself as an angry person so now that you're in anger management therapy, you feel like we're targeting who you are as a person, rather than an emotion you feel."

Katuski opened his mouth to disagree, but then thought for a moment. Wasn't that kind of the point? They were trying to change him. They were targeting his personality.

Weren't they?}

“Nope!”
“We love your temper we just want you to control it!”
“We want you to *improve* not simply *change*!”

{“Tch, whatever.” He crossed his arms and slouched deeper into the couch. “It’s not like you’re gonna actually be able to change anything. Soon enough everybody’s gonna realize Deku’s a loser and then they’ll just forget about this whole thing and everything’ll go back to normal.”}

“That ‘normal’ isn’t a good thing.” Shoji sighs.

{Hound Dog nodded, “That *has* been what’s happened in the past, hasn’t it?”

Katsuki didn’t answer. He just glared at the wall, wondering how much trouble he’d get in if he blew it up.}

“Plenty.” Aizawa deadpans.

{“We don’t have to change your personality if you don’t want to.”

Katsuki looked at Hound Dog in surprise, but quickly schooled his expression back to a scowl, “What? Isn’t the entire point of this to have me singing kumbaya by the end of the semester?”

“Not necessarily.” Hound Dog shrugged. “The point is to make sure you don’t hurt other people. But the things that make you who you are, like the swearing and yelling, aren’t bad in the right context.”}

“There’s nothing quite like cussing out a bigot.” Midoriya agrees.

“Now that I want to see.” Uraraka giggles.

{Katsuki looked at him skeptically, “What are you saying? That I can be *nice,”* he spat the word, “and still be a jerk? You must be a bigger idiot than you look if you think that’s possible.”}

“What am I? Chopped liver?” Miruko scoffs.

“Now I want this little twerp to intern with you, just so his ass gets kicked.” Hawks grins.

{Hound Dog chuckled, “Bakugo, there’s a big difference between being brash and being abusive. Take me for example,” he gestured to the muzzle covering his face, “I’m not really a nice

guy. I get so angry sometimes that I forget human speech, and I'm definitely not gentle, even when I'm just with my friends. My aggressive personality comes along with my quirk, same as yours does, but it's not a bad thing because I don't use my personality as an excuse to hurt people, does that make any sense?"

"No." Bakugo scoffed, but it kind of did. Maybe therapy wouldn't be so bad if he wouldn't have to change everything about himself. It would still be pretty bad, though.}

"Be honest." Kirishima groans.

{"Let me put it this way." Hound Dog said. "How would you like to be on the receiving end of one of All Might's full power punches?"

"The kind that changes the weather?" Hound Dog nodded, smiling, and Bakugo stared at him. This guy wasn't just an idiot, he was insane! "That would fucking kill me!"

Hound Dog laughed, "Yep, getting a full punch from All Might would hurt like hell and probably kill you to boot, so why does he still punch villains?"

"He holds back, you idiot!"}

A loud smack echoes through the theater as Bakugo's palm meets his forehead.

{Hound Dog nodded and hummed, "So? Objectively, he's still violent. I mean, he doesn't try to bring villains in by offering them flowers and holding their hands and singing kumbaya."}

"Toga is trying not to interrupt by cackling, "He said the thing!"

{Katsuki threw his hands up in the air, "I guess!"

"So how is that different from your anger?" Hound Dog asked. "Bakugo, if you learn what you do that genuinely hurts people, you'll be able to hold back on those behaviors just like All Might holds back on his punches, while at the same time maintaining the fierceness and, yes, even the rudeness that makes you who you are."

Katsuki sat silently for a minute. "So… I really don't have to lose who I am?"}

“That’s what he said.” Dabi rolls his eyes.

{Hound Dog shook his head, “No, you don’t. You’re in control here, I’m not here to force you to become something you’re not, just to make sure you aren’t going to keep hurting people like you have in the past.”

Katsuki glared at him, “I’m not going to be nice.”

Hound Dog shrugged, “I’m not asking you to be. You’re a brash person, Bakugo, just like me, and if I don’t have to be nice, you don’t either.”}

“It looks like you’re a great fit for young Bakugo.” All Might comments.

“That’ll make things a lot smoother.” Hound Dog grins.

{Bakugo scoffed, “So you really think I can be myself and still stay at UA, huh?”

Hound Dog grinned behind his muzzle, “It’s just a matter of honing your bark, but reserving your bite for the villains you fight.”}

“Was that a pun?”
Groan
“Does he think he’s funny?”

{Katsuki rolled his eyes and laughed, “Shut up, mutt, don’t try to have a sense of humor just cause you think it’s funny.”

Hound Dog laughed again, “Oh, but I am funny.” He stood up and opened the door. “I’ll see you in a few days, Bakugo. Don’t forget what we talked about, ok?”

“I’ll forget if I want to, mutt!” Katsuki yelled. “You’re not the boss of me!”}

”Why?” Aizawa groans.

“Would he really be Bakugo if he didn’t?” Mic chuckles.

{Hound Dog chuckled and waved as Katsuki stomped down the hall, back toward class 1A. That guy obviously didn’t know what he was talking about. Katsuki couldn’t be nice and angry at the same time, it was just impossible. Besides, even if it was possible,

Aizawa and that stupid rat-faced principal wouldn't be happy until they'd squashed his personality.}

"That is in no way the goal." Nedzu sighs.

{Kirishima was waiting in the hall by the time Katuski got back to the classroom a few minutes before the bell.

"Hey Bakugo!" He smiled with sharp teeth and Bakugo rolled his eyes, "How was your free period?"

Katuski just scoffed and shoved past Kirishima, "Get outta my way, shitty hair."

Kirishima laughed and stepped aside, "Glad you had fun, dude."

Katsuki glared, "I didn't have fun."

Kirishima shrugged, "Whatever you say, dude. Good luck next class, by the way, I hear Midnight's a total sadist when it comes to art history."}

"Among other things." Midnight purrs.

{"I don't need luck." Katsuki huffed, but Kirishima just patted him on the shoulder and went to go sit down. Katsuki found his own seat and put in earbuds for a few minutes. Maybe that stupid mutt was onto something. Probably not.

But maybe.}

"Progress!" Ashido and Kaminari cheer. The cheer is echoed throughout the room as the next chapter loads.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Izuku pays Overhaul back for threatening his mother.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

TW: blood

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Overhaul

{It had been a month since Inko's "mugging", as the police had called it, and Izuku was finally ready. The day after his mom was attacked, Izuku pretended to go back to Overhaul with his tail between his legs, but he was really playing the long game, making sure his mother was safe until he was ready to destroy the yakuza himself.}

"This is going to be *brutal*." Dabi grins.

{Being part of the yakuza was...interesting, for lack of a better word. For all that Overhaul bragged about "using him to his fullest potential" Izuku had basically been doing glorified busy work every time he was at the compound. He was seen as a 'new member' and so was at the bottom of the pecking order, a fact that irritated him to no end. He wasn't even allowed to be involved in the real work of the yakuza. All he knew was Overhaul's glorified rhetoric about a *quirkless* world. It was getting really annoying.}

"The fool was always a hypocrite." Mirio grumbles. "Seriously! He relied so much on his quirk and went on about them being a disease!"

“Then he took away yours.” Tamiki whispers sadly.

{Shouto had offered to come along and help him get his revenge, but Izuku had respectfully declined. Overhaul had threatened his *mother*, the only person who had even given a damn about him before he became a villain, so leaving the job to anyone else would have been supremely unsatisfying, even if that someone was a close friend like Shouto.}

“That’s oddly sweet.” Uraraka comments.

“To be fair if a villain targeted Midoriya’s mother we each would jump at the chance to assist in said villain's takedown.” Iida mentions.

{Izuku pulled his mask up over his mouth and jumped down onto street level, staying in the shadows as he sneaked up on the guards. A few slit throats and a stolen keycard later, he was wandering the silent halls of the upper compound. He knew there were only a few guards on this level, with most of the Yakuza living and working in the labyrinth below, so it didn’t take Izuku long to track down the dozen or so low-ranking members on duty that night and take them out. A simple throwing knife through the eye or a slit throat was a quick enough death for most of them. Izuku wasn’t about to waste time and energy playing when any of them could easily raise the alarm. Besides, these small fries were nothing more than collateral damage in his complete annihilation of Overhaul and an effective message to anyone else who might get it into their heads that it was a good idea to go after his mother. Izuku had bigger plans for the night.}

“He hasn’t even made it into the main compound and it’s already a bloodbath.” Midnight winces.

“If he hurts that little girl…” Aizawa grits out.

“I know, Sho, I know.” Mic comforts.

{It took him a few minutes to find the secret entrance to the rest of the compound since he’d never been allowed to find it unaccompanied, but it only slowed him down a little. He kept to the blindspots in the halls, silently killing everyone he came across until he found the barracks. He almost felt bad as he viciously slashed each one of the sleeping men’s throats, but the feeling didn’t last long. Yeah, none of them had made the call to attack his mother, but they had all made it known in the past month exactly how they felt about *weak, quirkless people* like him.

And they were following an idiotic psychopath, so there was that.}

Kaminari snorts “Yeah, *there is that.*”

{Izuku followed the same pattern as he gradually cleared the compound, picking the lock on every door and killing everyone inside. He hadn’t been surprised to find a variety of labs tucked away but was surprised at how little raw material they had stored. Shouldn’t there be a lot more chemicals involved in the production of quirk-erasing drugs?}

”Oh, just you wait.” Izuku growls.

{He pocketed a few vials of the quirk eraser that he found in the lab and used them to coat some of his knives before heading toward Overhaul’s room. The only other room left aside from his was a door that locked from the outside. Izuku didn’t know what was in that room, but whatever it was would still be there after he had killed Overhaul and his inner circle.}

”Eri”

{The expendables all stood up when he entered the small guard room he had to go through to get to Overhaul and he smiled at their shocked expressions as they took in his blood-soaked costume.}

“I can practically taste their fear.” Shigaraki chuckles.

{“Mastermind,” Chronostasis said, carefully keeping his voice even, “you’re not supposed to be here.”

“You’re right,” Izuku smiled, “I’m not.”

In a flash, Izuku had thrown two of the knives he’d dipped in quirk eraser at Setsuno and Sakaki since their troublesome quirks could affect him directly. He smirked when Setsuno’s eyes widened as he tried to steal the knife Izuku had just grabbed, only to be left grasping air.}

“Do we cheer for him?” Kaminari asks.

“I am.” Ashido shrugs.

{“What?" He taunted. "Having trouble with your quirk?”

Rappa pounded on his chest, “I’m not! And even if I was, I wouldn’t need a quirk to kill the likes of *you*! Just be sure to give me a good fight first!”}

“I don’t want to cheer for a villain but there’s a chance Mastermind might help Eri so I hope he wins, kero.” Tsu reluctantly admits.

{Izuku simply dodged out of the way of Rappa’s quirked punch and attacked the other members. He first ran toward Tengai, who threw up a barrier to block him but neglected to remember that Rappa was running after him at full speed. Izuku smirked as he dodged at the last minute, subjecting Tengai’s barrier to the full force of Rappa’s quirk, which broke through it almost immediately, allowing Izuku to step right up behind Tengai and slit his throat.}

“Fat’s shield and spear analogy makes a lot of sense now.” Kirishima considers.

{Rappa gave a scream of rage and ran at Izuku again, but he was already on the move, this time headed toward Hojo, who had already covered his body in crystals. Just like before, Izuku waited until the last minute before dodging and letting Rappa tear through his opponent's defenses before finishing him off.}

“Those crystals tasted weird.” Amajiki grimaced.

“I can imagine.” Hado snickered.

{“Enough! He’s using you to hurt your own men!” Chronostasis yelled and extended the hour hand of his hair to hit Rappa, immobilizing him. Izuku didn’t waste the opportunity and Rappa was dead before anyone had the chance to blink. Tabe immediately ran at him, mouth open wide, but Izuku simply shoved a knife down his throat before he had the chance to bite down. Four down, four to go, five if Izuku was counting Chronostasis.}

“He just shoved his hand down that guy's throat.” Togata winced.

“The same guy that *just kept eating* my tentacles.” Tamiki scowled.

{Katsukami ran to try to touch Izuku and sap his energy, but Izuku didn’t let him get in close, dodging while slashing with one of his longer knives and following it up with a throwing knife to the back of the head.}

“That guy was annoying.” Uraraka grumbled.

“Ryuku beat him eventually, kero.” Tsu comforts.

{“Who will you be going for next?” Nemoto asked.

“It doesn’t matter much at this point.” Izuku answered honestly. He didn't have much of a choice, after all, “Your quirk doesn’t help you in combat and both Setsuno and Sakaki are functionally quirkless right now. I’ll beat you all easily.”}

“Well that was blunt.” Tsukauchi sighs.

“But not incorrect.” Nedzu says grimly.

{All three rushed him at once, trying to overwhelm him with numbers, but Izuku had analyzed all of their fighting styles extensively over the last month and had *much* more experience fighting quirkless than they did. Chronostasis also couldn’t hit him without the risk of hitting one of his teammates, a mistake he wasn’t about to make again, so the fight didn’t last long.}

“Using a mistake too sike out the guy is *so* cute.” Toga coos.

{When they were all dead or bleeding out, Izuku finally turned to Chronostasis, who was staring at him in shock.

Izuku smiled and lazily tossed a knife at him, forcing him to dodge, “It’s a pretty cool quirk you’ve got there Chrono,” he tossed another knife, “too bad it’s got such a big weakness.”}

“And now he’s playing with the guy.” Ojirou winced.

{Izuku forced Chronostasis to keep moving, which prevented him from using his quirk, all while Izuku gradually moved closer. After a few minutes, Chronostasis was panting and finally stood still, apparently deciding that the benefits of using his quirk outweighed the potential danger. It was the wrong decision. Izuku slashed his throat before Chronostasis had even had the chance to extend his hair.}

“Nice moves!” *”Too easy!”*

{Izuku straightened as he heard the door to Overhaul’s room open behind him.

“What is the meaning of this?” Overhaul looked at his dead

underlings, crinkling his nose in disgust.

"The meaning of this," Izuku said, carefully coating a knife in the stolen quirk eraser behind his back, "is that you threatened the wrong person."}

"Oh, that's poetic." Shinsou grins.

"The perfect revenge." Mei agrees.

{Overhaul sighed and removed his gloves, "It will be a shame to have to kill someone so uncontaminated, but oh well."

He ran at Izuku, who watched him get closer without dodging. At the last moment, he ducked underneath Overhaul's outstretched arm and sunk the knife into his gut. Overhaul let out a grunt but simply slapped Izuku on the back.

Nothing happened.

"Nice quirk eraser you've developed, isn't it?" Izuku taunted as Overhaul's eyes widened. "Too bad you haven't practiced being...perfect? Wasn't that the word you used to describe people like me?"}

"Savage!" Dabi grins.

{Unlike his men's, Overhaul's death was not quick. Izuku took pleasure in slowly taking the man apart like he'd taken apart his mother. When he was finally done, Izuku gathered up all the knives he'd used during the fight and headed down the hall to the mysterious locked room. Whatever was inside must have been important if it was so close to Overhaul's own residence, and may be prone to escape if it had to be locked inside the room. After picking the lock, Izuku quickly grabbed a knife and shifted into a battle stance. It paid to be prepared for anything.}

"Don't you dare." Izuku grits out.

{Izuku was not prepared. He didn't know what he was expecting, but it definitely wasn't a little girl huddled on the bed staring up at him with wide red eyes. Izuku was suddenly very aware of the fact that he was covered in blood and holding a knife. The little girl seemed very aware of that as well if the way her wide eyes were tracking his every movement was any indication.}

“Well at least he doesn’t seem to want to hurt the poor thing.” Recovery Girl sighs.

{Izuku hurriedly put his knife away, putting his hands out in front of him in a belated attempt to be non-threatening, “Hey there. I’m not gonna hurt you.” The girl didn’t look like she believed him, but she also didn’t start screaming, so Izuku figured that was as good as it was gonna get. “My name is Mastermind, what’s your name?”}

“Well this is awkward.” Kaminari cringes.

{The girl fiddled with her hands in her lap and now that he’d gotten over the shock of seeing a little girl locked in the middle of a Yakuza compound, he noticed that her arms and legs were covered in dirty bandages, just barely covered in most places by her too thin nightgown.

“Eri.” Her voice was small and hesitant like Izuku’s had been when talking to teachers in middle school, and he felt his heart break. What was she doing here?}

“No wonder you get along with her so well.” Uraraka says softly.

“Even though I didn’t have it as bad as Mastermind it still wasn’t good.” Izuku admits.

{“Eri, is it ok if I sit next to you?”

Eri hesitated, but nodded, allowing Izuku to sit on the bed beside her. He pointedly ignored the fact that he was staining the sheets red as he looked her in the eyes, “What are you doing here, Eri?”

Eri trembled for a solid minute before replying, “...I have to help Overhaul. I’m sick.”}

“No the *fuck* you aren’t.” Kirishima growls.

“Is that what he told her!?” Bakugo scoffs in disgust.

“We are going to spoil that little girl rotten.” Ashido claims.

“I’m in.” Kaminari agrees.

{Izuku tried to ignore his anger. He didn’t need Eri getting any more scared than she already was, “What do you mean, Eri? What did you have to help Overhaul with?”

She tugged at the bandages on her arms and Izuku's eyes widened at the deep lacerations underneath, "My sickness makes other people not sick anymore, so Overhaul takes the sickness from my blood so he can put in other people so they're not sick."

Izuku's eyes widened. The quirk eraser he'd stolen was made from Eri's blood? Izuku wanted to march back to Overhaul's body and somehow bring him back to life so he could torture him to death all over again. What kind of monster tortures a little girl to get his hands on her quirk?}

"Mood."
"Understandable."
"I hate to agree…"

{Izuku looked at her softly, "You don't have to help Overhaul anymore, ok Eri? Overhaul's gone."

Eri looked Izuku up and down, wide eyes taking in the blood and her lip started to tremble. Izuku panicked, worrying he'd said the exact wrong thing. What if Overhaul had somehow convinced Eri that he loved her and he had just killed the one person she thought meant the world to her? Why was he so stupid!}

"No, no, no." Aizawa growls.

{Suddenly, Eri's arms wrapped around his waist and she started sobbing, "Thank you" she sniffled quietly, either not noticing or not caring that she was getting blood all over her hair and nightgown. Izuku awkwardly patted her on the back as he waited for her tears to pass. This poor girl had been through too much already.}

"How exactly is he supposed to help her?" Shigaraki scoffs.

{That brought him to the question of what was he going to do with her. He couldn't just bring her home. His mother and the cops would ask where he'd gotten her and it could reveal his identity all too quickly if they linked Eri back to Overhaul. Even if that wasn't an issue, Izuku wasn't ready for the responsibility that would come with raising a traumatized child. He wasn't about to entrust her to another villain group either. They would just use her for her quirk the way Overhaul had. Izuku sighed, there was only one option left.}

"Drop her off at a hero agency." Himiko nods.

"He is literally covered in blood, how is he going to do that?" Shigaraki growls in exasperation.

"Carefully." Dabi prods with a chuckle, earning a hand swipe.

{He gently grabbed Eri's shoulders and pushed her back so that he could look into her eyes, "Hey Eri. Are you ready to leave?"

Eri nodded eagerly, eyes bright with hope and Izuku knew that if she still knew how to, she'd probably be smiling.}

"Ugh, ow, my heart." Hagakure dramatically pretend to faint.

{_Izuku lifted her up so that she was clinging to his back before making his way outside. He wished that he'd left a path cleared of bloodshed, but he hadn't exactly been planning on carrying a five-year-old on the way out. If anything, he at least hoped Eri realized that the bodies they passed meant no one would be coming after her. It was probably a sick sort of comfort, but there was a chance it might make the whole ordeal less traumatizing.}

"I don't know how to feel about that." Eraser sighs.

"None of this is easy." Midnight agrees.

{The sky was just starting to get brighter as it got closer to sunrise and they had an excellent view as they ran across the rooftops toward Nighteye's agency. Izuku had figured out that Nighteye was investigating Overhaul while he was gathering his own info on him. The hero didn't know about Eri, as far as he knew, but despite his serious appearance, he had a good heart. Hopefully, he'd be able to help Eri recover and find a good home that would protect her from anyone who wanted to use her.}

"I hope he'd agree sensei was and is the best bet." Izuku comments.

"I'm sure he would Izu-Kun." Mei agrees easily.

"Yeah, sensei's like the best." Ochaco adds.

{When they reached the roof of the agency, Izuku slowly crouched down and pulled Eri off his back so she was facing him. He cringed at how she looked like she'd just come off the set of a horror movie, but sighed when he realized that that wasn't too far from the truth. At least none of the blood was hers.}

"Small comforts." Hawks quips, earning an eye roll and an elbow from Mirko.

{“The man who works here is a hero who was investigating Overhaul.” Izuku looked her in the eyes. “He’s going to take good care of you and make sure no one hurts you ever again. Ok?”

Eri nodded, but hesitated a moment, fiddling with the hem of her blood-stained nightgown.

“Mastermind-sama?” Eri’s quiet voice trembled slightly. “Why did you save me?”}

"Because each of us has lines they won't cross." Twice says softly, the other villains falling quiet. *"I'd like to think hurting a little girl is one of them!"*

{Izuku hesitated for a moment before deciding that Eri had already been fed far too many lies in her short life, “To be honest, I wasn’t trying to save you. Overhaul threatened someone I care about and I couldn’t let that stand. But I’m glad I was able to save you, even if it wasn’t why I originally killed Overhaul. I know what it’s like to have people hurt you just because they can and it’s something I wouldn’t ever wish on anyone.” }

Izuku's suddenly hugged from all sides.

{Eri stared up at him with wide eyes. “You were hurt too?” Izuku nodded and her voice dropped to a whisper. “But you’re so strong.”}

"Oh, honey." Joke coos.

{“Even strong people get hurt sometimes, and sometimes the people who hurt them try to make them feel weak. That’s what happened to you and me.” Izuku smiled and ruffled her hair. “We’re strong people and it’s not our fault that others chose to hurt us.”}

"That's right!"
"You tell her!"
"You can listen to the villain just this once!"

{Eri’s eyes lit up, “I’m strong?” she asked in wonder.}

"The strongest." Echoes through the theatre.

{Izuku laughed, “The strongest.” He stood up. “I’m happy I was able to meet you, Eri. Wait a few minutes after I’m gone, then knock on the door and tell them what happened. The heroes here will take good care of you.”}

"And he's leaving her on the roof." Tsukauchi groans.

{Eri looked up at him for a long moment before flinging herself over to hug his legs, “Thank you so much Mastermind-sama! Thank you!”}

Toga squeals "So cute! Especially covered in blood!"

{Izuku smiled and ruffled her hair again, “No problem, Eri. Be safe.”

Eri nodded and let go, waving to him as he got a running start and jumped onto the next roof. He only ran a few roofs away before stopping and crouching down. Eri was still standing on the roof, looking small against the skyline. She waited another two minutes before walking over to the door he had shown her. She hesitated a long moment before pounding hard with both fists.}

"At least he didn't leave her alone on a roof." Mic said ignoring All Might's flinch.

{Bubble-Girl thought it was much too early to be dealing with anything, especially teenage pranks. And it had to be teenagers, she thought as she trudged up the stairs, coffee in hand. Who else would climb up to the roof of a hero agency just to knock on the door? If it was anyone *normal* , they would knock on the front door at a *much* more reasonable hour.}

"She's gonna be in for a shock." Nejire giggled.

"Poor Bubble Girl." Tamaki whimpered.

"She might have a heart attack when she sees the blood." Togata agrees.

{She threw open the door, already mentally preparing the rant she’d give to the hooligans who had dared to disturb her this early in the morning but stopped short when she saw a scared little girl who couldn’t be more than five with blood smeared all over her.

Bubble Girl dropped her coffee.}

"A logical reaction." Aizawa states.

"It's the *only* logical reaction." Midnight rolls her eyes.

{Izuku smiled as he watched one of Nighteye's sidekicks usher Eri inside. The heroes would undoubtedly set up a perimeter to try to track him down, but he should be able to avoid all that if he left right now. He headed back to his base to shower and get dressed for school, sending a text to his mom telling her that he had gone for an early morning run.}

"The little girl is officially safe!" Amplifier declares. The audience claps and voices their relief as the next chapter loads.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2K

Feel free to point out grammar and spelling errors so I can fix them.

Also *fuck* head colds; and my laptop.

Check out my other fics:
•Agents of Chaos-vigilante! Izuku + friends
•The Research Vessel: Fuck You That's Why-Humans are space orcs + quirks
•Why Are You Like This? -soulmates + spirit animals

V:tGG Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Izuku continues his virtual vigilantism.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Quirks

{Izuku wasn't used to feeling proud of himself. He wasn't used to feeling loved either, but Mom had at least exposed him to the emotion, so it was understandable that the past week had been pretty strange. He had been doing virtual vigilantism every night, and he was getting so much better at hacking! He'd been working up to hacking into all the cameras in front of stores and stuff so that he had eyes everywhere, and it was so much fun!}

"I look forward to hacking lessons with your successor Yagi." Nedzu chirps.

"I'm sure he will be too. Especially after all this." All Might sighs.

{Not to mention that in some cases, it was actually *faster* to get heroes to crimes by hacking into their comms. He still couldn't wait to get his cast off so he could help the heroes fight, but...maybe he'd have to spend a few days a week doing it this way, even after he healed. He'd cross that bridge when he got to it, but for now, he finally felt like he was doing something right for once in his life.}

"Gotta work on that confidence dude." Kaminari comments.

{Which brought him to the other unfamiliar emotion: feeling loved.}

"Oof!" Shinsou cringes.

"I'm getting used to it." Izuku mumbles in his defense.

"You better be." Uraraka scolds playfully.

{_ He'd thought that maybe Eraserhead was just the exception and only missed him because of his habit of adopting strays.}

Midnight snorts "You've been called out Shota."

{_ If he stopped to pet stray cats, of course, he'd remember an annoying vigilante, so it only made sense that he'd miss Izuku because he was just more caring than normal, but that didn't seem to be the case. Every hero Izuku called seemed happy to hear his voice and said they missed him. They even asked if he was ok! No one asked if Izuku was ok, not Kacchan, not his teachers, not his classmates, but there were actual real-life pro heroes who seemed to care!}

"We do care damnit!" Amplifier calls out.

"He'll catch on eventually." Hawks comments hopefully.

"Before it's too late hopefully." Rock Lock mentions.

{Izuku knew that they only cared because they didn't know he was quirkless, so he couldn't help but feel a little bit guilty for lying to them.}

"We aren't entitled to your secrets." Mirko huffs.

{_ A part of him knew that he should just tell them so that they didn't waste their time on him, and he felt so selfish for keeping his quirklessness to himself, but he...he didn't want to lose this feeling. He knew he didn't deserve to feel loved, but...well it wasn't like he was actually lying to the heroes, right? He was just leaving out some info.}

"Sensei wouldn't care about all that." Jiro grumbled.

"We know that, but he still has to learn." Momo calms.

{That was part of the reason why he'd been dodging all the questions about what had forced him off the streets. If they knew he broke his arm, or when he broke it, then they might be able to pull hospital records or something and then they'd know who he

was and then they'd know he was quirkless and they'd force him to stop and they'd tell Mom and she'd be so worried and…}

"He's not even saying it out loud and I want to remind him to breathe." Ojiro comments.

"Someone hug that boy!" Hagakure adds.

{This was a problem with slow nights. Not that Izuku wasn't glad that no one was out committing crimes, but it left him too much time to get lost in his head. He switched between cameras again, looking for anything suspicious. There were a couple drunks like there was every night, and some other people wandering about, but no one was doing anything criminal as far as he could see. The closest thing to a problem he could see was a group of teenagers smoking, but they weren't hurting anyone, even if they were loitering.}

"Not worth the effort to scare off." Rock Lock nods.

{He was about to switch cameras again and see if he could track down any of the heroes and see what they were doing when one of the teens jerked suddenly, slapping his neck. Within seconds, the others were batting at the air and slapping themselves as well, but beyond that, Izuku couldn't see anything wrong. He really wished the camera he was watching through had audio so he could tell if they were just hallucinating from whatever they were smoking or if they needed help, but that was one of the disadvantages to doing his vigilantism virtually.}

"Isn't this how that last trigger incident started." Iida comments with some worry in his voice.

"It is, kero." Tsu confirms.

"At least Viridian won't get caught in the crossfire." Todoroki mentions.

"I-he won't see it that way." Izuku mentions.

"I predict at least one spiral in this... chapter? Chapter." Shinsou remarks.

"I'd call them episodes." Mei states.

"Guys, pay attention." Uraraka insists.

{It wasn't until they started attacking one another with their powerful quirks that he called the heroes. He debated a minute about which hero would be best before deciding they'd probably appreciate backup for a fight this big.}

"The more the merrier!" Joke chirps.

"Too many and we'll be stepping on each other's toes." Rock Lock cautions.

"I'm sure Viridian knows that." Brave assures.

{"Um, Eraser, Amplifier? A-are you guys busy?"

"Nope!" Amplifier chirped, "We're never too busy for you, cutie!"}

"I love her." Hagakure giggles.

{Izuku blushed but concentrated on the task at hand. The fight was going to start spreading soon if the way the teens' quirks were going out of control were any indication.}

"Good, keep on task." Aizawa comments lowly.

{"What's up, problem child?" Eraser asked. "You normally only call one hero at a time."

"Oh! Um, there's a fight on Hill Street. I don't know what started it, but...yeah it's starting to spread. I think the teens are all friends with each other, or at least that's how it seemed before they suddenly started fighting each other."}

"Trigger can 'ave that effect on folk." Snipe remarks.

{"Alright, I'm on my way, kid."

"Me too!"

Thankfully, it only took a few minutes for the two to reach the scene. Amplifier got there first and started using her quirk to disorient the fighters, confusing them as she leaped from building to building to basically surround them in sound. Izuku kept up a running commentary on the quirks he could see being used as they waited for Eraser to arrive, pointing out any weaknesses that Amplifier might be able to exploit.}

"We should have more analysts, especially ones that can do that." Cementoss comments.

{“Alright, be careful of the guy with the backpack and try to stay behind him, but um, you already knew that, since he’s basically extending his tongue into a net.}

"That was one of the quirks used by the Nomu in Hosu." Endeavor remarks. All the heroes and teachers tense; suddenly more uncomfortable with this situation.

{_ If he does try to go for you, stay close to the ground because I can’t imagine the street tastes very good and it might buy you some time. Um, who else...wait, did that guy just teleport?!”}

"Fucking teleporters." Bakugo growls.

"If we never have to deal with one ever again it'll be too soon." Kirishima agrees.

{The villain in question suddenly appeared slightly behind and to the left of Amplifier, landing a hit to her back before disappearing again, only to appear a few feet away. Well, that was strange. With a teleportation quirk, he could have just left as soon as Amplifier arrived, so why did he stick around. Did he *want* to fight Amplifier? Or did he have a limit on how far he could go? The latter option seemed more likely, because what teenager would willingly fight a pro-hero?}

Half the theater raises their hands in response.

"Boys you're grown-ass men put your hands down." Toga scolds.

{He watched the teleporter for another minute. He definitely kept Amplifier on her toes, but after that first time, she was able to get a glance of him in her peripheral vision due to his habit of popping up either slightly to the left or the right of slightly behind her. That didn’t make sense. Why wouldn’t he appear directly behind her...unless he couldn’t.}

"Nice catch." Amplifier grins.

{“Amplifier, try and bait the tongue guy into blocking the teleporter’s field of vision.”

He saw her nod and within a few seconds, the teleporter’s head

was wrapped in his friend's tongue.}

"EW!"
Shudder
Gag
"Nasty."

{_ Izuku shuddered. Gross. But, as expected, he didn't teleport to get out, instead punching the muscle until it let him go as Eraserhead finally arrived. Amplifier used that moment of distraction to knock out and restrain the tongue guy. }

"Poor guy, kero. I know he's the villain here but having your tongue punched is not fun." Tsu informs.

{"Sorry I'm late." Eraser said gruffly as he took out one of the other fighters, a guy with a few too many eyes.

"No problem, happy to have you." Izuku grinned. It was so cool to be able to watch them fight. "Oh, and the teleporter has a vision-based quirk like you, Eraser! He can only teleport to places he can see, so try to blind him before you have to blink."}

"Or wrap him in your capture weapon." Mic recommends.

{Eraser didn't waste any time wrapping his capture weapon around the man's eyes and knocking him out. There were still a few other fighters still on their feet and they immediately charged the heroes with a vengeance.}

"'Cause that always ends well." Dabi snarks.

{"Would've been nice to know these guys are hopped up on trigger, Viridian." Eraser grunted.

Izuku's eyes widened and he facepalmed, wincing as he accidentally hit himself in the face with his cast.}

"Fucking dumbass." Katsuki snorts.

{_ Should have used the other hand, "I'm so sorry! I should have realized that they shouldn't have all had such strong quirks and then you would have been prepared and then…"}

"Is this his second or third spiral in this chapter?" Shinsou remarks.

"Whichever it is I'd say one is too many." Ochaco huffs.

{“Be nice to the kid, Eraser.” Amplifier said as she punched someone in the face. “It’s not like he could tell they were high from all the way in his bedroom.”}

"I feel like there was a better way to say that." Amplifier cringes.

{Izuku shrunk in on himself. He was so useless! He couldn’t do anything right. Yeah, he was doing the best he could with a broken arm, but Amplifier was right, there were things he missed because he wasn’t actually down on the street. If the heroes lost this fight or got hurt it would be all his fault because he told them to go even though he didn’t have all the right info. }

"Heroes hardly ever have all, our even accurate information; if such events were to happen they could in no way be considered your fault." Nedzu remarks toward the screen.

{Thankfully, the fight didn’t last too much longer, since between Eraser canceling their quirks and Amplifier disorienting them, the fighters didn’t stand a chance. He heard Amplifier talking to Tsukauchi over the comms and was about to cut his own connection when Eraser started talking.

“Viridian?” He said softly. “Are you still there? You went kinda quiet there for a minute.”

Izuku was tempted to not respond. Maybe then Eraser would assume that he left them alone like he should have been doing all along, rather than annoying them with his stupid marbles and stupid incomplete information.}

"I agree with Hagakure he needs a hug." Kouda comments.

"Or seven." Shoji adds.

"You'd give the best ones." Dark Shadow snickers.

{There was a sigh over the line, “You’re not annoying us, kid. I’m sorry if I gave you that idea during the fight, I was just frustrated because trigger cases have been going up recently. It’s not your fault, problem child.”

“I should have been able to tell.” Izuku’s face burned as his voice came out choked. Why did he have to start crying *now* of all times?!}

"Oh honey." Midnight comments sadly.

{“No.” Eraser said firmly. “Amplifier was right, there wasn’t any way for you to tell they were on trigger just from the camera feed. It’s enough of an accomplishment that you were able to see the feed in the first place, so stop beating yourself up, ok?”}

"Easier said than done." Izuku grumbles.

{“...ok.” Izuku still wasn’t convinced, but he didn’t want Eraser to feel guilty just because he couldn’t control his stupid emotions and his stupid tears and his stupid muttering and his stupid…}

Midoriya suddenly finds himself crushed in invisible arms.
"Hagakure?" He turns back toward her.

"I can't reach him so I'm settling for you." She informs. "Which works well since you're technically the same person so you need more hugs too."

{“Are you ever gonna tell us why you switched to online, kiddo?” Amplifier asked. Izuku jumped, he’d forgotten he was still connected to her comm as well.

“Oh, um, just...stuff and, you know...life.” He grimaced. *Smooth*. “Um, thanks. Goodnight!”}

Snort
"That went well."
"He was right that was smooth."
Giggle
Slow clap

{He cut the link before either of them could say anything else. Izuku frowned and rubbed at his arm, which had become annoyingly itchy as it healed. Maybe he’d have to start researching problems beforehand so he had more information to give to the heroes. It probably wouldn’t help with stuff like muggings, but maybe for drug busts? Maybe he could find some more info on trigger to pay Eraser back for today?}

"That's unnecessary." Aizawa huffs.

{Izuku sighed and closed down his computer before crawling back into bed. He’d have to deal with that tomorrow.}

"At least he's not running himself ragged, *again.*" Yagi sighs.

{Izuku rubbed his head as he tried, once again, to concentrate on his history assignment, but it was no good. He'd woken up a few minutes before his alarm this morning, gasping as he remembered the fight when he'd actually met Eraserhead for the first time. That had also been a group of thugs minding their own business who suddenly went crazy and started fighting each other for no reason, and Eraser had mentioned they had trigger in their systems. And there was also the thing with the flys. He hadn't thought much of it last night, but those teens had been swatting at the air almost like there were bugs or something trying to bite them. }

"Good he's connecting the dots." Todoroki nods.

"How did you make facts sound like a conspiracy theory." Shinsou questions.

"By considering his theories fact." Izuku rolls his eyes.

"He says as though he doesn't place bets on each one." Ochaco pokes.

"Can we not break the law on a regular basis?" Tenya sighs.

{Izuku sighed and grabbed his phone. He wasn't being able to concentrate anyway, so he may as well take a walk to clear his head, right? And who knew, maybe he'd find something where the fight broke out that would be able to help Eraser's investigation.}

"Really, Problem Child?" Eraserhead groans.

"There, there, you arrested all the villains remember." Yamada comforts mockingly earning a half-hearted glare.

{He had to take a train to get to the corner where the teens had been smoking, and Izuku got plenty of weird looks, considering that most kids his age were supposed to be at school in the middle of the afternoon, but Izuku ignored them and most people just shrugged and continued on with their days. Izuku wasn't surprised, people always looked away from him, he just wasn't interesting enough to merit paying attention to. He was used to being ignored.}

"How many times is this kid gonna punch me right in the goddamn heart!" Mirko complains. "I wasn't even sure I had one of those 'till I showed up here." Earning herself a few laughs.

{The corner looked different in daylight, and Izuku looked up until he saw the camera he'd hacked into the night before. It was weird seeing the street from this angle, but a good kind of weird, and it made Izuku smile slightly before he went back to looking around for clues. He didn't really know what he was looking for. After all, if there were insects or mosquitos or something, they would be long gone by now, but…}

"...not necessarily if a quirk was involved." Izuku theorizes.

{A metallic glint caught Izuku's eye and he looked around briefly before walking toward it and kneeling down. He sucked in a harsh breath as he saw the crushed corpse of a tiny robotic bee, a cracked glass cylinder acting as its abdomen. The guy that slapped his neck must have managed to damage it enough that it couldn't fly away, and the abdomen container could easily hold a tiny dose of trigger, which would explain why Izuku had never seen either group shoot up.}

"Shit!" Aizawa cursed. "Fuck!"

"Seconded." Tsukauchi sighs.

"See, I want to ask what's going on but I'd bet Headcase won't let you tell us." Hawks pouts.

"And you would be correct." Headcase giggles.

{Izuku grabbed a small ziplock from his bag, it had held carrots at one point, and picked up the bee, hoping there was enough of it left for him to hack into, then started heading back home. He still had homework to finish, after all.}

"I doubt he could hack into that." Tsukauchi sighs.

"He hacked around a signal-jamming quirk didn't he?" Toshinori reminds.

"Hacking *around* a quirk and hacking *into* a quirk are two very different things." Aizawa pinches the bridge of his nose in frustration.

"All we can do now is wait and see." Nedzu dismisses.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

The conclusion of the USJ.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Cheat Code

"Ah shit! The USJ!" Kaminari exclaims.

{Shigaraki's entire body contorted in rage as he frantically looked around for whoever was speaking, "You're the cheater who switched up the levels! Who are you?"}

"Okay, boss, we are all aware you're not the most mature leader we could have but this..." Dabi says pointing to the screen "This is just sad."

"Yeah, but it's kind of funny that we didn't see him act like this in Mastermind's world." Toga chirped.

"That's only because nothing went wrong." Twice comments. *"Because that Midoriya kid is smarter than us all."*

"Whatever." Shigaraki grumbles.

{Izuku looked to Mei, who was looking at him with wide eyes. There was no way he could tell Shigaraki his real name. The villain would be able to track him too easily and that would put Mom, Mei, and even Katsuki's family in danger because Shigaraki could choose to target any of them to get to him. He also couldn't say he was *Deku* for many of the same reasons. He'd grown up with that nickname and it was way too strongly associated with Izuku Midoriya. It wouldn't take more than a few days of asking

around to figure out who *Deku* really was if Shigaraki asked the right people.}

"Are we going to target civilians like this kid mom?" Dabi questions lowly making his displeasure at the thought known.

"That'd be so totally not cute!" Toga pouts.

"Relax, we're not some filthy griefers." Shigaraki scoffs.

"What about Hosu?" Twice asks. *"Wouldn't that qualify?"*

"That was a calculated attack." Tomura says defensively.

{As his thoughts whirled, a memory of something that Shigaraki had said earlier popped into his mind and Izuku had to hold in a breathy sigh of relief.

“What kind of a question is that? You said it yourself, Shigaraki.” For this to work, Izuku needed to be someone Shigaraki could respect. Someone confident and an opponent who he knew could counter him at every turn. He gave a cocky smile and leaned back in his chair, hoping to channel that same energy into his voice. “I’m Cheat Code.”}

"And he's taken the name Cheat Code." Todoroki remarks smugly.

"Todoroki please just stop." Izuku begs.

"I will." He agrees.

"I don't think it counts when this was the last piece of Headcase's little teaser." Shinsou points out.

"She did it on purpose I know it." Izuku grumbles.

{Nedzu was beginning to understand Yamada’s panic now.

He was torn between bursting with pride for his student’s quick thinking and wanting to ground him until he was thirty for his recklessness. Why did he have to call attention to himself like that? The villains had a warp quirk for goodness' sake, what would happen if they simply warped over to the main campus and attacked Midoriya directly?! He was quirkless and didn’t have any strength or training to defend himself with! Nedzu didn’t want to lose his student before he’d even really had a chance to

teach him!}

"How is watching Nedzu panic worse than watching my other self panic!?" Mic exclaims.

"Because Nedzu doesn't panic." Aizawa deadpans; though his grip tightening on his armrest gives his nerves away.

{But now wasn't the time for panic, now was the time for his intelligence to shine. It was time for damage control and protecting his reckless student from himself so that his reckless student could protect the other children from the villains. Was this what parenthood felt like?}

"Sometimes." A few adults remark in unison.

"Dadzu." Someone whispers.

{"Everyone, please only refer to Midoriya as Cheat Code from now on." Nedzu ordered. "Especially when we arrive at the USJ. We don't want him to become a target."}

"Other me is not going to like that." Shigaraki mumbles.

"How dare they not take your feeling into account!?" Dabi drawls dramatically.

"Shut up." Tomura rolls his eyes.

{"Yes sir." All Might's voice echoed over the comms. "Young Iida is heading your way, he tried to stop me, but I decided to leave him to you."}

"My alternate self is most likely quite panicked at such a dismissal." Iida comments.

"But just like running that day it was the best decision." Izuku comforts.

{"Ah, I see the little listener now!" Yamada said.

Iida was kicking up dust as he headed their way almost slid as he saw the teachers and skidded quickly to a stop, "Teachers! There is an attack! I wanted to warn All Might, but he ignored…"

"We know, young'un. We done been told by…" Snipe trailed off and glanced at Nedzu, who shook his head. Snipe nodded

resolutely, “by a third party. Come with us, you best give your report on the way."

For a moment, Nedzu thought that Iida would collapse in relief, but after a second, he squared his shoulders and started running back the way he had come as the teachers followed, “Yes sir!”}

"Go Iida!"
"Go senseis!"
"Hurry!"
"Keep going!"

{As Iida filled in the gaps and described the attack, Nedzu couldn’t help but feel like they couldn’t get there soon enough.}

"Don't jinx it!" Amplifier cries.

{On screen, Shigaraki was attacking his neck like it had personally offended him, “Where are you, Cheat Code?! Tell me!”}

Dabi snorts "Sure, just let me sign my death sentence myself." He mocks.

{“That’s the way your warp quirk works, isn’t it?” Izuku asked, his curiosity getting the better of him. “You can’t come to stop me if you don’t actually know exactly where I am. That’s why you were so angry when your signal blocker couldn’t tell you my location.”}

"Called out." Kaminari snickers.

{“Iz...Cheat Code.” Mei said softly. “I’ve unlocked the doors. Most of the students are evacuating now, but there are a couple overachievers I’m having to keep away from the plaza.”}

"Todoroki and Bakugo." Aizawa sighs.

{Izuku nodded in acknowledgment. Faintly over the comms, he heard the sound of people cheering and smiled. It had been two minutes.}

"All Might! All Might! All Might!"

{“That’s the thing about having the cheat codes, Shigaraki.” Izuku said. “Not only can I change the levels, but the boss is on *my*

side.”}

"Oh snap!"
"That was smooth!"
"Whoop!"

{“What the actual Goddamn fuck!” Bakugo growled as yet another wall collapsed in front of them, blocking their path for the fifth time in five minutes.}

"Truly impressive vocabulary, Blasty." Ashido teases.

He raises an eyebrow at her "Do I need to bring up Blockhead's class?"

"He's got you there." Sero chuckles. Kaminari and Kirishima wisely keep their mouths shut.

{Eijiro was secretly relieved, “Dude, have you noticed that the walls only collapse if we try heading toward the fight? Maybe if we try heading toward the entrance…?”

“Shut up, Shitty hair!” Bakugo screamed. “I’m gonna take down their stupid escape route and a few walls aren’t gonna be enough to stop me!”}

"If this happened now do you think he'd act any differently?" All Might wonders aloud.

"It would depend on who he's with. Kirishima; yes. Kaminari; maybe. Anybody else; who knows." Aizawa waves him off.

{“But did you hear that dude on the intercom?” Eijiro asked. “This Cheat Code guy is probably doing this! He’s probably working with the teachers, so if we just leave…”

“I’m not gonna let some coward who won’t even show his face get in my way!” Bakugo yelled and exploded another piece of rubble so he could get through. “Now are you gonna help me or not?”}

"Ugh, I know he's an asshole and all, but I *really* hope he's not dumb enough to say something like that to a support engineer." Mei complains.

"It's okay Mei-chan, he'll learn." Izuku comforts in a voice that's a little too happy.

{Eijiro instinctively hardened as an insane burst of wind pressure whipped through the USJ and he hoped he wasn't imagining the booming voice that followed.

"I am here!"}

"I remember the relief I felt when he came bursting through the door." Mineta sighs.

{Toshinori wasn't smiling. The situation was just as bad as young Midoriya had made it out to be. A broken Aizawa was pinned under a massive villain that he assumed to be the Nomu that he had been warned of, so now, his main duty was to save his coworker. If only he'd been here!}

"One of many mistakes I will always regret." Toshinori whispers to himself.

{Toshinori lunged forward, calling the full power of One for All into the punch. Dust whipped up from the force of the attack and Toshinori was just getting ready to grab Aizawa and get him out of there when he realized that the villain...no, the *monster,* hadn't even budged.}

"Well that's terrifying." Aizawa deadpans.

"You don't remember him showing up?" Joke asks.

"I was unconscious by this point." Aizawa informs.

"This is why I hate the phrase 'serious injury', is too vague." Rock Lock comments.

{"That's not going to work, All Might!" A young man with dirty blue hair and a hand over his face cackled loudly, "Nomu has cheat codes of his own to kill the big boss! The only way you're going to be able to beat him is to slowly gouge out his flesh, and I don't think he's going to let you do that!"}

Shiver
"Ew."
"Ugh."
"No thanks."

{"Shock absorption." Young Midoriya muttering echoed around

the plaza. “But he had a strength...no super strength was never his quirk, was it? That’s why he was still able to hurt Eraserhead, even with the net, which should have blocked…”

“You’re not as smart as you like to pretend, Cheat Code!” The young man, who Toshinori realized must be Shigaraki, the leader, said gleefully, “Are you forgetting that Nomu is a mod? He doesn’t have to follow the rules!”

Toshinori really should read up on the teenagers' lingo if this was how the next generation of villains was going to talk because seriously, they might as well be speaking greek. All that he got from that was that Nomu was dangerous, but he’d already known that.}

"New class activity: Teach All Might about video games. Class B can come too." Kaminari declares. A variety of agreements and complaints follow.

Aizawa sighs "I almost feel bad for you, but you're retired now and need to figure out how to relax."

"Should I be scared?" All Might questions.

"Depends on the games." Mic chuckles.

{Young Midoriya’s observations, however, were much more useful.

“Shock absorption, huh?” Toshinori rushed the Nomu and grabbed him from behind, yanking him up and forcing him to let go of Aizawa. “Thanks for telling me how to beat him!”

He bent backward, careful to avoid the unconscious Aizawa as he supplexed the villain into the ground. If he could just stop him from moving…

Ow...that couldn’t be good.}

Izuku exclaims slightly hysterically "Oh, you think!?"

{Izuku turned on some fans so that the dust would clear faster and he could get a clear visual of the fight. All Might had managed to get a hand on the Nomu, but unfortunately, the Nomu had also gotten a hand on him. Kurogiri had created a

warp gate right where All Might had tried to bury the Nomu and created another one under All Might so the villain could grab him. The Nomu was digging his fingers into All Might's side and had apparently managed to open his old scar if the blood staining All Might's shirt was any indication.}

"Oh, kero. How am I just realizing the reason you didn't relax back then was because you knew about his injury?" Tsu puts her palm to her forehead.

"To be fair, the last USJ incident was Mastermind's." Iida winces.

"Yeah, we were all pretty distracted." Shinsou cringes.

{All Might desperately tried to pry the Nomu's hands away from his left side, but the angle was all wrong and Izuku still couldn't get his mind off what Shigaraki had said about Nomu not following the rules. What had he meant by that?}

"Fucking multiple quirks, goddamn All For One..." Midoriya mumbles aggressively.

{"Good work. Kurogiri!" Shigaraki grinned. "We've got him right where we want him now!"

"Normally, I wouldn't want blood dirtying the inside of my warp gates." Kurogiri said calmly. "But for a hero such as yourself, I am willing to make an exception."}

"Go! Giri-chan!" Toga cheers.

{Izuku's eyes widened as he realized what their plan was. The Nomu was strong, so if he was able to pull All Might halfway through the portal...Izuku couldn't let that happen, but what could he…?

He muted his connection to the USJ's PA system, "Nedzu, how far out are you?"

"We can see the building." Nedzu said. "We'll be there momentarily."}

"Come on just a little faster." Midnight begs.

{Izuku's mind raced as he thought about the quirks they had available, "Is Iida still with you?"

"Yes, he is." Present Mic said. "But we were about to send him to

check on the other little listeners.”}

"Not the time." Izuku states tensely.

{“Alright. Here’s what you need to do.” Izuku kept an eye on the plaza, where Shigaraki seemed to be taking his time toying with All Might before killing him. “Cementoss, liquefy the cement under your feet so you can slide easily and have Iida use his quirk to push you to the USJ and get you there faster. If you can harden it right after you’ve passed so Iida doesn’t have to worry about slipping, that’d be best. When you get inside, use your cement to immobilize the villain holding All Might. Present Mic, you use your quirk to tell the students to get out of the way. Got it?”}

"An excellent strategy presuming nothing goes wrong." Nedzu remarks tail twitching in subdued distress.

{“YEAH!!! Hey, kids! Clear a path for us, ya dig?!?!”}

"Move!"
"Go, go, go!"
"Fucking book it!"

{Izuku noted that the comms were programmed to decrease the volume of Mic’s voice when he activated his quirk. He’d definitely have to take a look at that coding after this was over, that was so cool! He listened to Cementoss briefly relay his instructions to Iida and then there was a sound of an engine before a grey and white blur launched through the front doors, stopping just before the steps. Within seconds, the cement under the plaza had come alive and hardened just short of All Might, neatly encasing the monster.}

"Go, Cementoss!"
"Nice job sensei!"
"That's our lit. teacher!"

{“Crap!” Shigaraki scratched his neck. “The heroes are here!”}

"No shit." Dabi snarks.

{“Perhaps it would be best for us to make our exit.” Kurogiri said, already making a portal to leave.

“No! We can’t let them get away!” Izuku yelled. “Does he even have a real body to target…?”

“Iz...Cheat Code-Kun!” Mei yelled and pointed at the screen. “If he’s got armor, he’s got a body, I overheard Rock-Kun and Bomb-Kun saying something about it!”}

"Not the worse nicknames I've heard for those two." Headcase remarks absentmindedly.

Kirishima opens his mouth to comment only to have Bakugo slap a hand over it and growl at him. "She has access to fucking multiverse; do **not** ask that question."

{“And armor is made of metal, which…” Izuku scanned through the weapons until he found a taser, then reconnected his audio, “Wasn’t your objective to kill All Might?”

That set Shigaraki off, “Show your stupid face, you cheater! If it wasn’t for you changing the rules, our quest would be done by now!”}

"Oh, Shigi." Toga sighs in disappointment causing Tomura to sulk.

{“Tomura Shigaraki, calm down.”

Kurogiri was so distracted trying to calm Shigaraki’s most recent tantrum that he didn’t see the attack coming until the electricity hit him in the back. Immediately, he seized up and fell to the ground unconscious and the mist surrounding his body temporarily dissipated just enough for Izuku to see the man underneath, though the effect disappeared before he could get a good look at the villain’s face. Knocking him out had also caused the portal to close, slicing the Nomu in half.}

Gasps
"Ew, ew, ew."
"Ugh!"
"So gross!"

{Izuku felt like he was going to throw up. Sure, the Nomu didn't seem human, but he probably was and it was Izuku’s attack that caused the portal to close and kill him...wait, how was the Nomu still moving?}

"Unfortunately, it’s not entirely human." Ojiro cringes.

"This insight into our comrades' struggles has been disturbing to say the bare minimum." Tokoyami remarks.

"I'm almost glad we were in the downpour zone." Kouda shivers.

{“I told you, Cheat Code,” Shigaraki gloated as the Nomu *completely regenerated his missing limbs,* “Nomu doesn’t follow the rules!”

“H-how?” Izuku watched in shock, “Multiple quirks? That would change everything we know about…”}

"Not now!"
"Focus!"
"Nerd later!"
"Off topic!"
"Come on man!"

{“Fight now, nerd later.” Mei reminded him. “Man, these students really wanna fight, don’t they? It’s just these three, but I’m running out of stuff to throw at ‘em.”

Izuku muted himself and looked over at the screens Mei was working with. It was Katsuki and Kirishima on one and Todoroki on the other. All extremely powerful students and all probably itching for a fight. Izuku knew he couldn’t trust Katsuki not to try to explode Shigaraki the moment he saw him, but one of the other two...well maybe it’d be worth the risk to get Aizawa out of there so that All Might could fight without worrying about hurting him even more.}

"I would prefer you left the students out of it." Nedzu remarks.

{“Let Todoroki through.” Izuku ordered. It would be too difficult to separate Kirishima from Katsuki. “I’ll handle it from there.”

Mei looked at him skeptically, “Are you sure? Nedzu said…”

“I’ll take the blame if something happens, Mei-chan.” Izuku said. “Just do it.”}

"Other me..." Todoroki says to the screen "please don't screw this up."

"How are you that deadpan?" Shinsou asks slightly impressed.

"Practice." Todoroki deadpans.

{This was the oddest villain attack Shouto had ever been a part of, not that he had many other experiences to compare it to. First,

the villains breaking into a secure facility, then the absolutely pitiful efforts of the front line, and finally, the way that the building itself had seemed to come alive to prevent him from helping in the main fight. That last one was probably due to Cheat Code, whoever that was. Shouto had heard his father ranting about *idiots in support who didn't know when to shut up and take orders,* by which he meant to say that they thought they could tell Endeavor what to do. Cheat Code must be someone like that.

Which basically meant that Shouto liked him already.}

Izuku snorts "Sometimes I forget how petty you can be."

Meanwhile...

"Damn Endeavor, you sure know how to raise spiteful kids." Mirko snarks.

"Sons," Enji corrects "my daughter tries to keep the peace."

"Let me guess; she's in denial that anything's wrong." She scoffs. He doesn't answer.

{That didn't mean, however, that he was going to stop fighting. He had been training his entire life to be a hero, so he could more than handle these weak villains. It was stupid to make Aizawa keep fighting alone and outnumbered when Shouto could help. Cheat Code, however, seemed determined to make him leave, which meant that it was both relieving and incredibly suspicious when the environment suddenly stopped fighting him. Shouto wasn't about to look a gift horse in the mouth, so he rushed toward the plaza as quickly as he could and took stock of the situation.

It was chaos.}

"That's putting it mildly." Shinsou drawls.

{The teachers had arrived and were beginning to fight the last of the cannon fodder that Aizawa and his classmates hadn't taken care of, but they apparently weren't out of the woods yet. A giant villain was matching All Might punch or punch while trying to maneuver around Aizawa, who was on the ground, but appeared to be waking up. The warp villain was on the ground as well, but the leader was using the fight between All Might and the monster

to shield himself from any potential attacks from the teachers. Shouto, however, might be able to get a clear shot at him. It would put him at risk, especially since he didn't know what the villain's quirk was, but living with his father was a risk too, so it was just what heroes did.}

Todoroki found himself on the receiving end of an invisible hug; the girl citing he clearly needed more in his life.

{It was only years of his father's training that kept him from jumping when a loud voice echoed from a speaker right behind him, "Use your ice as a slide to get Eraserhead out of there and take him to the entrance."}

"Please listen." Ochaco begs.

{Shoto knew there was no point in looking around, since it was almost definitely Cheat Code giving the orders, "Wouldn't it be better to attack the leader directly?"

"Prioritize the rescue." Cheat Code pleaded. "All Might can't fight at full power if Eraserhead is in the way, and he's in no condition to keep fighting right now."}

"He's right; just get me out of there so this can end." Aizawa demands.

{Izuku held his breath as Todoroki hesitated, looking between Shigaraki and Eraserhead before nodding. Izuku let out a sigh of relief. There had been no guarantee that Todoroki would trust him, especially since the students probably didn't know he was working with the teachers, but he'd been hoping.}

"Yay, you didn't fuck it up!" Mei cheers.

"Good." Todoroki states, patting his living necklace on the back.

{A slick track of ice shot forward from Todoroki's foot and froze the ground under Eraserhead, then more ice piled underneath him until gravity took control and Eraserhead, who was now awake, if extremely disoriented, was able to slide away from the fight. Honestly, on second thought, sliding him probably hadn't been the safest option with his injuries, but it was the only thing Izuku could think of that wouldn't put Todoroki at risk and he'd promised Nedzu that he would protect the students. Hopefully, Eraserhead wouldn't be too angry at him.}

"He's going to thank you for saving his life." Mic assures.

{All Might glanced over to Todoroki with a nod, “Take care of him, young Todoroki!”

For about half a second, Izuku wondered if Todoroki would attack the villains anyway, but then Eraserhead groaned quietly. Todoroki’s eyes filled with something unreadable and he nodded to All Might before helping Eraserhead back to the entrance. Good. Now onto the Nomu.}

"Where does his kindness come from?" Ectoplasm questions.

"His mother." Endeavor says with an unreadable expression.

{“There’s no way to know what quirks the Nomu has,” Izuku broadcasted, grateful that he’d insisted on All Might saving his strength for the fight, “but if he was designed to beat you, All Might, he’s probably got what it takes to withstand you at full strength.”

“Then I’ll just have to go beyond that!” All Might said. “Plus ultra!”}

"**Plus Ultra!**"

{The surrounding fights came to a gradual stop as everyone had to anchor themselves to avoid being blown away from the whirlwind that was created as the two exchanged blows faster than Izuku could see. He couldn’t help fanboying just a bit as All Might used a final punch to knock the Nomu through the ceiling, “Whoa…”}

Brave whistles very impressed.

{“Well, villain.” All Might grinned. “You’re outnumbered and your ultimate weapon is out of commission. Are you really sure you can beat this level?”

“No! Cheaters!” Shigaraki lunged forward and Izuku’s breath caught as he realized that All Might was steaming! Going beyond his quirk’s limits like that probably took the last of his strength, but he should have enough left to dodge...shouldn’t he?}

"No, no he doesn't." Izuku stresses.

{Shigaraki screamed as Snipe shot his hand and one of his legs, but the rest of the bullets were redirected by a purple warp gate.}

"Oh good he woke up." Shigaraki sighed in relief.

{Izuku swore and reached for his keyboard. When had Kurogiri woken up? Had they all been so distracted by All Might's fight that no one had noticed? He tried to think of something to stop the villains, but the warp gate was already passing over Shigaraki, taking him to god knew where.}

"And safe!" Twice cheered *"Strike one!"*

{Izuku caught one final complaint from Shigaraki right as the portal closed, "Sensei lied to me! All Might's not weaker at all! Why didn't he tell me about the cheater?!"}

"How the fuck was he supposed to know?" Monoma questions.

{He sighed and muted his mic as he sat back, suddenly extremely tired as the adrenaline he'd been running on for the past thirty minutes left him in a rush. Next to him, Mei was in a similar state. Present Mic had taken Eraserhead from Todoroki and was now handing him off to paramedics, who were also taking Thirteen and a maxed-out Kaminari. Katsuki looked pissed and Kirishima was trying to comfort him as Hound Dog escorted them out of the building. Cementoss created a rough wall to block the student's view and nodded to All Might, who took that as his cue to deflate with a bloody cough. It was only after he deflated that he seemed to remember Izuku and Mei and he looked at the nearest camera in panic.}

"Whoops."

{Mei's eyes widened at All Might's small form, "What the…I don't think I was supposed to see that."

Izuku glanced over at her and he knew he should be way more worried about her finding out All Might's secret, but quite honestly, he was too tired to panic anymore, "Yeah. He does that sometimes."}

Jiro snorts "Damn Midoriya, you sound exhausted."

"To be fair... I am." Izuku remarks setting off a chain reaction of relieved snickering.

{For his part, All Might looked slightly exasperated, “Young Cheat Code, this is serious!”

“Eh, it’s just Mei.” Izuku shrugged. “Better than the villains or all of class 1A. That’s part of why we needed to keep the students away from the fight, in addition to protecting them. Didn’t want anybody seeing that you know? And she’s not gonna tell anyone, All Might, right, Mei?”

“Right…” Mei collapsed back into her chair.
“Ok...yeah...whatever, the number one hero has some secret transformation quirk. No big deal.”}

"Why am I not surprised?" Shinsou grins.

"'Cause you've been paying attention." Mei chirps.

{All Might coughed again, “I, uh, greatly appreciate your discretion, young…”

“Cheat Code?” Nedzu cut off All Might’s rambling before it could begin, making both Izuku and Mei jump. “Are you and your assistant alright?”

Izuku and Mei exchanged a look and she giggled, “We just beat the crap out of a bunch of villains, we’re exhausted! And Izu-Kun is *my* assistant, not the other way around!”}

"My apologies for the mix up miss Hatsume." Nedzu chuckles.

{Nedzu chucked knowingly, “I hid a blanket in your desk when I was creating your room. You never know when you’ll need a nap after a long night of working, after all!”}

"Dadzu."

{Izuku raised an eyebrow as Mei dug through the desk’s drawers and pulled out a giant fluffy monstrosity that really seemed larger than should realistically fit where they found it.

Mei gasped and nuzzled her face into the blanket, “Oooh! Izu-Kun! It’s so soft!”

“Rest.” Nedzu said cheerfully. “You deserve it. You did well.”

Izuku froze. Nedzu was..proud of him? Had that ever happened with a teacher before? What was he supposed to do?! Should he

say something? How was he supposed to handle this?}

"Aw." Hagakure whines as she switches targets back to Midoriya.

{Mei quite literally pulled him out of his thoughts as she dragged him to the floor and wrapped both of them in the blanket. Izuku was vaguely aware he should probably be panicking about *something* right now, but he was too exhausted to do anything but take the comm out of his ear and pass out.}

"Oh God." Izuku mumbles into his hands with a blush.

{And if Shinso happened to take a few pictures for blackmail purposes when he dropped by during lunch, well...Izuku could always find a way to hack his phone later and steal them.}

"And plot my revenge." Izuku huffs.

"And what does that mean Midoriya?" Shinsou asks skeptically.

Izuku turns to him with a smile filled with false innocence "No spoilers Shinsou-Kun."

"What does that mean!" Hitoshi replies with far more fear.

"Hush now Shinsou-Kun, the next chapter is starting."

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

Updates at the mercy of my ADHD

S:THMH Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

The villains prepare for the heroes to arrive.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Last Minute

{Hitoshi kept his hands in his pockets as he walked down the deserted streets, glad to see they'd been correct about most of the other villains rushing to stake out the objectives in the first few minutes. Once the heroes arrived in a couple hours, this would be one of the only safe places to be recognizable as a villain because the way the exercise was currently run, the civilians were definitely *not* on their side. They'd avoid it later, once they got their hands on some civilian tokens, but for now, this area had exactly what Hitoshi needed. Weapons.}

"So they plan to steal the identities of two of the guests." Nedzu grins.

"And they're arming themselves." Mic adds.

"That's all well and good so long as their broker doesn't turn them in." Aizawa mentions.

{The pawn shop Izuku had told him to go to was at the bottom of a staircase in the middle of a dark alley, so about as shady as it could get. Hitoshi didn't bother knocking on the door before going inside. The most dangerous villains acted like they already owned everything and then worked to make that happen, so that's what he and Izuku were going to do. }

"You already look more intimating." Ochaco comments.

"That is the point." Shinsou drawls.

"I'm just glad we're not going the psycho route," Izuku shivers "being stuck in this theatre with a handful of them is enough."

"And Mastermind; he's more than enough." Mei remarks.

{The man at the counter looked up as Hitoshi came in, “Hello there. You’re a bit younger than my usual clientele, but I’m not one to turn away a customer.”}

"Well that's scummy." Ashido grumbles.

{“I’m sure.” Hitoshi said dryly. “I hear this is the best place to get weapons.”

The man grinned, “You heard right. You can call me Shiguro. What did you have in mind?

“The works.” Hitoshi said smoothly. “I need at least 4 handguns and an assortment of knives, but I’ve recently come into a little cash, so I’m looking forward to seeing what you’ve got.”}

"Ooh, that was *smooth*." Kaminari compliments.

{Shiguro grinned and straightened up a bit, “Ooh, I always like a challenge, especially when it comes with deep pockets.”

He gestured for Hitoshi to wait and disappeared into the back room for a few minutes, which Hitoshi used to get a look around. There wasn’t much to see, honestly, but that was as expected and he ran through what he knew about the guy he was dealing with. He and Izuku had found a forum for past participants and it seemed like everyone had something to say about this guy. From what he’d heard, this Ito guy seemed almost too good to be true.}

"That's because he probably is." Dabi rolled his eyes.

{Because he was. }

"Called it."

{Shiguro came back into the front with a large duffel bag, “Here you go, kid. Tell me what you think?”

Hitoshi gave him a wary look before taking the duffel and looking through it. There was a variety of handguns, shotguns, and a

sniper rifle, which would definitely come in handy, as well as a few knives and explosives, which they wouldn't need to buy if everything went according to plan, but it was probably a good idea to have them, just in case the job later went south. Overall, it seemed like a good start and they could always steal more later if they needed it.}

"What does he mean they won't have to buy explosives!?" Mic questions loudly.

"Wonder 'ow well them boys will aim." Snipe considers.

"Must there be a sniper rifle in a school event?" Tsukauchi sighs.

{"Throw in a bit more ammo and we'll call it good." Hitoshi said. "Hey, you've got a pretty good variety of goods here, how do you keep track of it all?"

"Oh, it's my quirk." Shiguro said. "I have an insanely good memory, so everything I have and everything I get goes right up here in my big old brain and stays there. A lot less risky than keeping physical copies lying around for the police to find."}

"Oh that's *perfect!"* Izuku grins bouncing in his seat.

{"Hmm." Hitoshi nodded. "Yeah, that makes sense. So there's no physical record of what I'm buying. I just want to make sure, in case you try going to the police or something."

"What? No, there's no copies!" Shiguro put a hand on his heart. "I would never…"

Hitoshi smirked as he took control, "Good, that makes things easier. Forget you ever had any of the items in this duffel bag and forget I was ever here while you're at it. Wait for three minutes after I've left before waking up."}

"*Can* you affect memories?" Iida turns to Shinsou.

The boy shrugs "Don't know, haven't really gotten to practice with my quirk."

"So this situation is beneficial for you." Todoroki comments. "You get to see how the other versions of yourself use it and learn from it."

"I think that applies to all of us, kero."

{He left Shiguro slack-jawed at the counter and slung the duffel over his shoulder. Haru Shiguro. A pawn shop owner that appeared in the exercise every single year. His son was apparently participating in the exercise this year as a student,}

"Hey, wasn't Shiguro one of the support course kids in Cheat Code?" Mineta asks.

"Oui, I believe so. He could locate objects if I remember correctly." Aoyama confirms.

{_ which was the only reason Hitoshi knew that he wasn't lying about his quirk, but it's not as if father and son were on opposite sides. From what the past participants had said, going to him was only a good idea if you planned on getting arrested the first few days. Somewhere on day three or four, he'd turn traitor for the heroes and give them, from memory, everything they needed to track down every villain he'd sold to.}

"Fucking snitch." Dabi sneers.

{It was a good thing that memories were finicky things. }

"Quite the sense of epicaricacy." Tokoyami rumbles.

{There was a slight sound of static in his ear and Hitoshi winced as Izuku's voice came through a bit too loudly, "...toshi? Hitoshi? Can you hear me?"

"Loud and clear Izuku." Htioshi groaned. "A bit too loud, actually."

"Oh, sorry." Izuku continued speaking at a much more comfortable volume. "I have your next targets. Are you done at the pawn shop?"

"Yep." Hitoshi hefted the duffel, knowing that Izuku was probably watching him. "Feel free to delete the footage of me coming and going, that guy won't remember I was ever there."}

"Damn that's efficient." Sato remarks.

{"Good." Izuku was quiet for a short moment. "Done. Ok, are you ready for your target yet?"

Hitoshi readjusted the duffel, "Yeah, shoot."

He could practically hear Izuku smiling, “Ok, so go to the main square. There’s going to be a guy in his early twenties with pink hair. He’s your target.”}

"I can't wait to see what they come up with." Amplifier mentions.

{Kyoka wandered the streets and walked into a cafe as she tried to figure out her first move. Despite it just being a training exercise, UA and HUC had turned the training grounds into a practically bustling city for the week and she got the feeling that for the civilians, it was basically just life as normal. There were grocery stores, cafes, and even theaters that were just going about their daily operations, so it was a good thing that each of the villains had been given a handful of cash to get them started. They were obviously expected to just steal more later, but the time before the heroes arrived was for setting up, not committing crimes.}

"And I've counted over a dozen crimes already." Gran Torino snarks.

{She was feeling kind of hungry, so she decided to stop at a cafe she passed while she waited. She got a few weird looks for her outfit, but nothing more than she usually did on a normal day, so she didn’t really care. The line was really long, so she had a lot of time to think as she made her way to the front. She closed her eyes and both felt and heard one for all humming under her skin, slowly syncing with her heartbeat. It was both louder and somehow quieter than she’d expected and it almost felt like the power was trying to whisper so that it didn’t hurt her ears. It would have been sweet if that was actually possible, but no. Kyoka was pretty sure it was all in her head. There was no way a power could *whisper*. }

Midoriya snorts "Oh, it does more than whisper."

"What does that mean?" Jiro demands.

Izuku raises his hands in surrender. "And *spoil* the surprise?"

"I hate that stupid rule." Kyoka grumbles.

{“Hello there!” a middle-aged woman smiled at her. “What can I get for you?”

“A red bean cake?” Kyka browsed the menu. “And a boba tea, if that’s alright.”

“Coming right up!” the cashier pressed a few buttons. “Token?”

Kyoka frowned. “Token?”}

"Oh dear, this can't be good." Momo comments laying a comforting hand on Jiro's shoulder as the other girl groans into her hands.

{“Oh, most of the little shops in the exercise have us tap that little participation token they gave you at the start, you know, that little disk they gave you when you showed up. That's kinda how we check that you’re a part of the exercise and not some intruder. Plus, it helps the company track which places are popular and what to bring back next year, so we always try to scan them. I’m surprised you don’t remember that from orientation.”}

"We must not tell the villains that." Ectoplasm hums.

{“Yeah.” Kyoka frowned and pulled out her token. “It seems like it'd be pretty important.”

She put her token down on the counter and the mood immediately shifted. If she hadn't known all these people were paid actors, she would have thought they were actually panicking. The cashier looked genuinely terrified as she stared down at Kyoka’s red and black token.

“It’s a villain!” The lady cried out, a glint of challenge in her eyes as she watched for how Kyoka would react. “Somebody call the heroes!”}

"This is getting exciting!" Toga cheers.

"Let's see how the little one survives this." Shigaraki hums.

{Denki resisted the urge to restlessly pace back and forth, “Remind me why we’re just waiting?”}

"Calm down zap cannon." Bakugo barks.

{“Because the beginning of this exercise is going to be a bloodbath.” Mom explained. “The minute that the heroes set foot inside the city, it’s open season, so it’s going to be a race to see if we can get the objectives before the heroes can get to us, got it?”

"Kinda…" Denki looked down at the bank. "But why are we camping out so early? The heroes won't be here for another two hours!"}

"But the other villains are already there." Shoji points out.

"As they say 'no honor among thieves." Dark Shadow chuckles.

{"Because we're racing the other villains." Mom laughed quietly. "Look over there, see anything odd?"

Denki frowned and looked where mom was pointing. Sure enough, people were hiding in the shadows of the building next to them, just like they were hiding in the shadows on this rooftop. Oh…

"So, we're not gonna have to fight the heroes," Denki gulped, "But we are gonna have to fight *them*. "

Mom grinned, "bingo."

Denki took a deep breath and thought about those two terrifying kids he'd seen at the orientation, "Oh joy."}

"Could you sound any less excited?" Sero teases.

"We know more than he does about how dangerous Mido can be. I'm just glad he's not underestimating them because they're his age." Kaminari argues.

"Yeah, good job other Kami!" Mina cheers.

{Nedzu watched with interest as the Midoriya child drafted an email to the event coordinator for the HUC team using an email address that was just one letter off from his own. It was a brilliant piece of social engineering, but why did the boy want there to be a faux charity event on day three? Was he trying to lure the heroes? That wouldn't help much if it was just him and his friend against an entire class of heroes. He wasn't about to interfere and risk not finding out the boys' plan.}

"Impersonating me is quite the bold move." Nedzu grins.

"First explosives and now this." Mic groans.

Aizawa doesn't say anything out loud, instead mentally noting the

disasters that can come from explosives and charity.

{It was impressive that he had hacked into Nedzu's systems so quickly. Honestly, it was impressive that he had tried at all, but his purple friend had been correct in assuming that Nedzu had made the exercise network significantly easier to hack into than UA itself. Still, it showed a considerable amount of skill and even though there were definitely areas of his technique that needed polishing, he got the job done. He'd singled out two seemingly random civilian files and Nedzu was still trying to figure out what he planned to do with them. He had a few suspicions, but it was more exciting at this point to see how things played out naturally.}

"Identity theft incoming." Brave jokes.

{He was already intrigued and the heroes hadn't even arrived on site yet. Spectacular!

"A lot of the villains are already waiting for the heroes to come in." Cementoss pointed out. "It's a smart play. It'll give them an advantage if they can pull off a robbery in those first few minutes."}

"Though with all that competition that might be a big 'if' for each of them." Midnight considers.

{"And it looks like one of the middle schoolers has already gotten themselves into trouble." Aizawa sighed. "Predictable."}

"Sorry sensei." Jiro groans.

{"Come now Aizawa, be fair." All Might insisted. "It's not as if the villains were warned about their tokens proclaiming their status."

"They *were* warned, actually." Midnight said. "It was just in the fine print and not in quite so many words."}

"Always read the fine print." Rock Lock shakes his head.

{"Plus, they're different colors." Aizawa said. "It's only logical to assume we'd use them to separate them and tell them apart from the civilians in the game."

"I'm interested to see how she deals with being targeted like this." Gran Torino had insisted on attending to make sure young Jiro

was alright, which Nedzu had immediately approved. Hopefully, he'd be able to give a good example to All Might on how one should teach as well because it had come to Nedzu's attention that he still had a ways to go before he was ready for next year's classes.}

"That's an understatement." Many teachers say in unison.

{_ "The heroes aren't there, so the best move would be either to rob the place for extra cash if she's committed to the villain role, or just to turn tail and run. Both are decent options."

"I'm more concerned about those two Shadows kids." Midnight said. "They've decided to divide and conquer, it looks like, but they don't have burner phones yet, so there's no way to communicate with one another."}

"That's where you're wrong!" Midnight corrects her on-screen counterpart.

{Nedzu hid his grin behind his teacup. His teachers hadn't noticed that Midoriya had spent this entire time gaining access to the system. They would definitely be surprised when they realized that Midoriya was using their own comms to communicate. That was the thing about humans, they were always making assumptions about how the rules were supposed to work. It was going to be delightful to see them all proven wrong.}

"We won't disappoint!" Izuku cheers.

"What he said." Shinsou agrees with some less enthusiasm.

"I look forward to it." Nedzu chuckles at his students.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Don't you just love rereading something and picking up on foreshadowing you completely overlooked the first time?

D?ITHSP... Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Izuku begins his private lessons with the principal.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I think he's some pro...

Reputations

{Izuku gratefully took the offered cup of tea and held it between his hands as he waited for it to cool down to a drinkable temperature. Nedzu was smiling at him across the desk over his own cup, a variety of files and loose papers spread out in the kind of organized chaos Izuku was more than used to from his own room.}

"Deku's first lesson with Nedzu; this should be fun." Aizawa deadpans.

"I should hope so." The principal chuckles.

{“Well Deku,” Nedzu chirped, setting down his cup, “I must say that it’s a pleasure to finally be able to begin our private lessons. It’s not often I find a student I’m excited to teach, so I’m happy you were able to fit me in during your free period.”}

"With everything going on I'm now only mildly terrified of this." Ashido comments with a bit too much enthusiasm to be perfectly sincere.

"Mood." Kaminari responds with a tense smile.

{Izuku nodded eagerly, “I’m really excited to be learning from you, sir! High Specs sounds like such an interesting quirk and you do a lot of interesting work behind the scenes of the hero community by finding difficult villains or the ones who prefer to stay in the shadows…”

He hurriedly shut his mouth when he realized he was rambling, but Nedzu didn't seem to mind, "Yes, that is correct. It's a role you've filled yourself, is it not?"}

"I guess that's one way to put it." Midoriya responds sheepishly.

{Izuku rubbed the back of his neck, "I mean, not really. I mostly focus more on quirks and combat, not on tracking people down like you do. I did a little work like that on my internship with Nighteye, but I'm not very good at it yet."}

"Any skill worth having takes time to learn." Tsukauchi intones.

{"That's of no importance." Nedzu said. "We can't expect you to be perfect at everything you try without practice! Remember that you have been analyzing quirks for much longer than you've been doing other aspects of hero work, so you can't expect to have reached the same level of excellence."}

"I think we all need to remind ourselves of that from time to time." Kirishima scratches the back of his head self-consciously.

{"I wouldn't call it excellence…" Izuku muttered, but Nedzu ignored him.}

Jiro snorts "Good."

{"That being said, one of the reasons you are here is so we can work on developing that magnificent mind of yours and honing it into a truly terrifying weapon!" Nedzu clapped his hands together. "So this semester, I'll be teaching you about strategy."}

"Like he needs it." Twice scoffs. *"Fool could use the help."*

{Izuku nodded, "I'm in your hands, sir, please take good care of me."

Nedzu smiled, "Perfect. Now, I would like to apologize, first of all, because I took the liberty of looking deeper into your past, especially in light of yesterday's incident."}

Various members of the audience flinched and cringed at the bits and pieces of his past they'd seen.

{Izuku shrunk in on himself. Now Nedzu was going to find all of his teacher's old notes on him being a disruption and practically

begging to be beaten up because he didn't have a powerful quirk. Teachers always sided with Katsuki, Aizawa was just an exception to that rule.}

"Not the only one."
"Nedzu won't be like that."
"Just wait you'll see."

{"I must say that your old school's treatment of you is shameful."}

"Yes it was."
"Preach."
"You said it."

{Izuku looked up so fast he almost gave himself whiplash, "What?"

Nedzu looked at him seriously, "Your middle school is guilty of gross negligence when it comes to their treatment of you. They hardly even bothered to hide that they fully knew of the mistreatment you were receiving at the hands of your peers, and they appeared almost proud of the fact that they allowed the abuse to continue. You did not deserve any of that, Midoriya. You are highly intelligent, a fact that should have been obvious far before now, but they turned a blind eye to your strengths because of their own discriminatory biases."}

"What he said." Hawks joked.

{"I'm sure they didn't mean…" Izuku tried to say quietly, but Nedzu held up a hand to cut him off.

"You tend to give people the benefit of the doubt far too often, Midoriya. No doubt because you have always been treated as if others were in the right for hurting you." Nedzu stared at Izuku with fire in his eyes. "I believe you will understand why I, of all people, do not have any patience for discrimination."}

"Oh he's bringing that up." Aizawa whispers in slight awe.

{Izuku swallowed heavily and nodded. Nedzu smiled again, "So you can see why I would like to see some justice done on your behalf! I would like to use your old middle school as a case study this semester to teach you about human psychology and how to destroy a reputation."}

"He's guiding a hero student through revenge?" Shigaraki questions in surprise.

{“Umm...I admit that learning psychology will be interesting,” Izuku said nervously, “but why would I ever need to know how to destroy a reputation?”}

"My father." Shoto and Dabi quip in unison. Tensing at each other's voices before purposely looking away from each other.

{Nedzu took a sip of his tea, “Most villains don’t rate very high in public opinion polls. Say what you will about our society, but there is something to be said that most people recognize that robbing and hurting people is wrong. However, every once in a while, a villain comes along that is able to shift public opinion in their favor. They often try to portray themselves as doing the wrong things for the right reasons, or by saying that their victims deserve it for whatever reason. In these cases, it can be very dangerous to go after the villain directly. Do you know why?”}

"The court of public opinion is merciless." Tokoyami remarks.

{Izuku thought for a moment, “Well, if the villain is able to convince people they’re doing the right thing, then the public will mutiny when the police and heroes go after them. It’s almost like by going after a villain like that, the heroes themselves start acting like villains and the villain is the persecuted hero.” He looked up at Nedzu who was staring at him proudly. “Is that right?”}

"That sounds like a nightmare." Hagakure winces.

{Nedzu nodded, “Exactly, Midoriya. When villains manage to get some semblance of a good public reputation, it is often most effective to target that first so that the public sees them for what they are, rather than what they claim to be. In these cases, it is often most effective to completely destroy their reputation before capturing them, otherwise, even if you manage to lock them up in Tartarus for the rest of eternity, you’ll never truly be rid of them. Why do you think that is?”}

The word 'followers' echoes through the room as thoughts of Stain and the like come to mind.

{Izuku hummed, “Well, especially if they claim to be doing the wrong things for the right reasons, they’ll probably inspire

followers. Their influence will still be felt, probably even more keenly since the media might be tempted to make them into a martyr, so then you'll have to deal with an army led by the villain's ideals, not just the villain himself."}

Toga holds her hand out to Dabi for a high five. His response of an eye roll and huff before complying has her giggling madly.

{Nedzu smiled, "Perfect. I must say that I am ecstatic that the reports of your intelligence were not exaggerated at all! So, now that you know why this skill is necessary, I would like to help you completely destroy your old middle school to help you gain the knowledge and skills you'll need to defeat such villains in the future. And of course, the sprinkling of good old-fashioned revenge doesn't hurt either."}

"Isn't this going a little far?"

{"Isn't this going a little far?"}

Izuku blushes and snaps his mouth shut.

{_ Izuku asked. "I mean, I get that the way they treated me...wasn't the best...but do they really deserve to have their reputation *destroyed?* " He shrunk down in his chair. "After all, I'm just one quirkless kid. I'm not really worth making a fuss over."}

"That's where you're wrong!" Uraraka states with conviction.

{Nedzu nodded, "You *are* worth giving a fuss over, Midoriya, as I'm sure Aizawa and the others have tried to help you realize." He held up his hand when Izuku tried to protest. "And even if you weren't it would still be worth taking them down. Can you think of any reason why?"}

"Wha..." Izuku starts confused.

"A weak quirk." Mei states.

"A strong mutation, kero." Tsu reminds.

"A villainous quirk." Shinsou sighs.

"There's no such thing." Izuku answers weakly.

{Izuku shook his head. If it wasn't about him, there was no reason

to go after the school. They treated the students with wonderful quirks fairly and they might not be a top-ranked school, but they weren't a bad one.}

"But how many kids had these so called 'wonderful' quirks?" Aizawa questions.

{Nedzu sighed, "Let me pose a question. If your middle school willfully allowed you to be abused for years because of your lack of quirk, do you think it's possible they have allowed or will allow, abuse in similar situations? Say a student with an undesirable heteromorphic type quirk, or a weak quirk, or even someone with a more powerful quirk, but one more stereotypically associated with villainy?"}

"How would Aldera treat me?" Shinsou pushes. The growl that answers him tells him enough. But the gritted teeth and fists clenched on comfy sweatpants say even more.

{Izuku's eyes widened. He wanted to say no, of course, Aldera Junior High wouldn't allow kids like that to be bullied, that he was just different because he was quirkless, and that the teachers treated all the quirked students fairly. But… hadn't some of the kids he'd tried to stop Katsuki from bullying fit those descriptions? Hadn't one of them had a rat quirk? Hadn't that other one had a weak quirk that only allowed her to change her eye color? Had the teachers ever stepped in to help them? Izuku had just assumed they hadn't because Katsuki had switched to him, but what if that wasn't the case? How many kids were being hurt right now, just because the school never tried to help them?}

Bakugo gives a quiet but emphatic "Fuck."

{"Let's say I agree with you." he said hesitantly, "Wouldn't it be easier to let the police or the parents resolve the issue? Why should I be the one to take them down?"

Nezu smiled, "Because you're a hero."}

"Damn straight!"
"Exactly!"
"And you're a great one!"

{Izuku's jaw dropped slightly at the warm feeling in his chest. That was what he was training to do, wasn't it? He wanted to be a hero to give hope to the quirkless, but couldn't he be a hero to

the weak and abused as well? He looked into Nedzu's eyes and realized the principal knew *exactly* what he was doing when he said that. Didn't make it any less effective, though.}

"Nor do I mind." Midoriya chuckles.

{"Fine." Izuku sighed. "I'll learn how to bring them down, but that doesn't mean I'm totally on board with destroying them yet."}

"Baby steps." Mirko Snickers.

{Nedzu nodded, "I don't expect you to be, as long as you promise you'll think about it. For now, we'll stay at the level of the hypothetical. I'll teach you different methods we could use to systematically destroy their reputation, but it will be up to you if you decide to put them into practice or not. How does that sound?"}

"Good enough for now." Shigaraki remarks.

"Routing for a hero kid?" Dabi teases.

"They did this shit to Mastermind too." Shigi sneers.

Dabi scowls at the reminder "Fuck 'em."

{Izuku nodded and picked up his tea, "I think that'll be ok. It'll be useful to know either way, right? For the future?"}

"Bets on how long he holds out?" Kaminari asks.

"After internships." Sero guesses.

"He's way too nice to do it before finals." Ashido claims.

"I think the stress of the USJ might push him over the edge." Kirishima points out.

The group cringes, Kaminari responding "Forgot that was coming up for a minute there."

"And we just finished that shit with Chest Code." Bakugo gripes.

{Nedzu smiled, "Extremely. Remember, Midoriya, that some villain fights aren't fought on the streets or even in dusty warehouse bases. Some villain fights take place on the front pages

of newspapers or on the back pages of hero forums. These are the fights that matter most, though, because these are the battles for the hearts and minds of the people." He took a sip of his tea. "Which is arguably even higher stakes than even their lives."}

"A broken body may *lose* it's life, but a broken soul may *take* thousands." Tokoyami states.

{"Does that mean that there are some villains who aren't seen as such?" Izuku asked curiously. "Are there some people who have managed to completely turn public opinion in their favor so that the people don't even realize the crimes they're guilty of?"}

Everyone glances at Endeavor which he pretends not to notice.

{Nedzu looked at him proudly, "Yes, Midoriya. It's a part of our job as heroes to be on the lookout even for those invisible villains. They are much more difficult to take down than the stereotypical villains you see on the news," his smile grew, "but that just makes it so much more fun!"}

Endeavor shivers trying not to look at the creature.

{Izuku chuckled and stood, "Thanks for having me, Nedzu! See you tomorrow."

Nedzu nodded and stood to show him out, "Perfect, Midoriya! I'll gather the documents we'll need to begin. Who knows, maybe I'll even be able to rope Detective Tsukauchi into this!"}

"I'm already here." Tsukauchi jokes.

{Izuku rolled his eyes, "I think the detective is busy enough as it is. Have a good day!"

Nedzu smiled and waved as Izuku ran down the hall to get to his next class, then closed the door so he could start working on his plans for their next lesson.}

"That went well." Midnight chirps.

"And now to see if he can hack *into* a quirk." Aizawa reminds.

"I'm cautiously optimistic about that." All Might remarks.

"If anyone could." Gran scoffs fondly.

MM:SFH Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

The police and heroes have a chat with Eri.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist for Hire

Eri-chan

"Oh right, the murderer." Mic sighs.

"At least we weren't the only ones to forget about it." Midnight groans.

"Wishful thinking." Aizawa comments.

{“Is this her?”

Tsukauchi looked through the glass at the girl Nighteye had brought in, who he’d said was named Eri. Officers had already taken samples of the blood covering her, but they hadn’t had time to clean her off yet, so most of it had already dried to a dirty brown and was starting to flake. Recovery Girl was on her way to take a look at her since they didn’t know if Eri would be safe in a hospital because of her ties to the Yakuza.}

"Someone give that poor girl a change of clothes." Rock Lock demands clearly agitated.

"And some wipes to clean herself up." Joke agrees.

{As soon as Eri had mentioned that Overhaul and all of his men were killed by Mastermind, Nighteye had sent his sidekicks and a whole team of police officers to investigate the base, only to find a bloodbath. There hadn’t been a single person left alive, with the exception of Eri, and Overhaul himself had obviously been

tortured to death, Mastermind's signature M carved into his body over a hundred times.}

"Holy shit."
"Note to self: do *not* piss of Midoriya."
"I'm glad it glossed over that."

{_ The police were still in the process of taking pictures of the scene before they could remove the bodies and they had already had to set up a perimeter to keep out the media, who had flocked to the compound as if they'd smelled the blood.}

"One of them can." Izuku comments.

"Seriously?" Shinsou deadpans.

"Yeah, Saito-san of In The Dark, his quirk is Bloodhound. It works on other things but it's most effective on blood." Midoriya informs.

"That's cool, a little annoying, but cool." Shinsou remarks.

{Tsukauchi sighed and walked into the interrogation room, Nighteye and Nedzu right behind him. He hated that they had to interrogate this little girl who had obviously been through too much in the last 24 hours, but anything they could find on Mastermind put them one step closer to discovering his identity, which was essential to resolving the high-stakes hostage situation he had set up.}

"As one of the hostages, I'd appreciate it." Hawks chirps.

{"Hello, Eri." He spoke softly, sitting down across from her and putting his files for both Mastermind and Overhaul down on the table. "My name is Detective Tsukauchi, this is Nedzu and you already know Sir Nighteye. Is it alright if we ask you a few questions about how you ended up on Nighteye's roof this morning?"}

"I hate when kids are involved." Joke comments.

"We all do." Brave agrees.

{Eri nodded, her wide eyes scanning the room in a clear display of hypervigilance. Seriously, Tsukauchi knew that Mastermind was depraved, but traumatizing a child? That was a new low.}

"Oi! He didn't do that shit!' Twice defends. *" He's a monster!"*

{“Who left you on the roof, Eri?” He asked.

“He, um, said his name was Mastermind.”

True

“What did he look like?”

“He was short and, um, he had pretty green eyes. He smiled a lot too, I think. He had a mask covering his mouth, but, um, his eyes were smiling.”}

"She's so cute!" Hagakure squees.

{*True*

Tsukauchi looked at Nedzu and Nighteye who returned his glance and nodded. It matched what they knew of him, so it probably really was Mastermind, but why would a villain, especially one as powerful as Mastermind, drop a little girl off at a hero agency when he could have just kept her for himself or sold her off?}

"I do *not* like those implications." Midoriya scowls.

{“Do you know why Mastermind kidnapped you?’ Nighteye asked with a frown.}

"He didn't." Jiro rolls her eyes.

{Eri looked confused, “He, um, didn’t kidnap me. Mastermind-sama saved me.”

True

Nighteye’s eyes widened and Tsukauchi knew that he looked much the same.}

"God, it's like they think we have no morals at all." Dabi scoffs.

{Nedzu seemed to be the one who maintained the most composure in light of this new revelation, “What did he save you from?”}

"That's a tactful way to ask." Momo comments.

{“Um, Overhaul...he was a bad man. He told me I was sick and that’s why he hurt me.”

True }

"Fucking bitch."
"Worthless asshole."
"Suffer."

{Eri was starting to tremble and Tsukauchi realized that she was more terrified of Overhaul than she was of Mastermind. The child was obviously traumatized, but the question now was who was responsible for that.}

"She just said...!" Amplifier exclaims.

{Nedzu hummed, “Do you know why he saved you?”

Eri nodded, “Mastermind-sama, um, he said that he wasn’t trying to save me. Um, he’d already killed all the, um, the bad men by the time he found me.”}

"Still..." Uraraka mumbles.

{*True*

“Did he tell you why he killed Overhaul and his men?” Nighteye asked.

Eri frowned, “Um, I think, um, he said…” Eri’s frown deepened as she tried to remember. “Mastermind-sama said that Overhaul had, um, threatened someone close to him? I think he killed him so he couldn’t hurt them anymore.”}

"Which is *very* useful information." Tsukauchi comments.

{*True*

Tsukauchi rapidly scribbled that down in Mastermind’s file. Maybe they could find people who Overhaul had threatened and it could lead them to Mastermind’s identity. It was a thin lead since Overhaul had undoubtedly threatened a lot of people as a Yakuza boss, but it was more than they’d had in months.}

"I wonder how often they use one villain to find another." Kouda comments.

"Probably pretty often; since the successful ones have connections." Shoji suggests.

{“Did Mastermind tell you anything else? Maybe why he decided to leave you with Sir Nighteye?”

Eri fisted her hands in her dirty nightgown and bit her lip, “He said he was like me…” she whispered.}

"Oh, honey." Midnight coos sadly.

{*True*

“What do mean?” Nedzu asked patiently.

Eri stayed silent for a long moment and Tsukauchi was starting to worry that they’d pushed her too far when she started speaking again, “Mastermind-sama said that um, that people hurt him too. He said that um, strong people get, um, get hurt sometimes and he said, um, that I was strong too, just like him.”}

"You are." Aizawa whispers comfortingly.

{*True*

She looked up at them. “Was he telling the truth? Do strong people get hurt sometimes, too?”}

"I can attest to that." All Might remarks solemnly.

{Nedzu took her hand and smiled, “Yes, even strong people sometimes get hurt by others. It wasn’t your fault that Overhaul hurt you and it doesn’t mean you’re weak. If people were weak simply because others chose to hurt them, I wouldn’t have ever been able to become a hero, because they hurt me too.”}

"I have a newfound respect for our principal. This is the second time we've seen him admit to a no doubt painful past in an effort to comfort another being." Iida comments. The rest of his now extended friend group agrees readily.

{Eri’s eyes brightened and there was a knock on the door, “Is everything alright, dearies?” Recovery Girl poked her head through the door, “I’m here to take a look at that little girl.”}

"Finally." Recovery Girl gripes.

{Tsukauchi nodded, “I believe that we’ve asked all the questions we had about Mastermind.” He turned to face Eri. “Although, we’ll probably have to ask you more about Overhaul and his operation. But that can wait for another day.”}

"It better." Aizawa grumbles.

{“Alright then! Everyone out!” Recovery Girl said sternly as Eri started to shake and she rapped Tsukauchi on the head with her cane, “I need to check on the patient and you all are going to make her claustrophobic. Out!”}

Chuckles and giggles at the nurse's harsh but fair treatment of the men roll through the room releasing some tension from seeing their favorite little girl in such an uncomfortable position.

{They quickly complied, leaving Recovery Girl to comfort Eri and examine any injuries she might have. As soon as they were outside, they stopped and looked at each other.}

"A pause for dramatic effect." Kaminari jokes.

{“Mastermind was most likely a victim of abuse as a child.” Nedzu said. “If not at the hands of his parents, then likely at the hands of teachers or peers. This abuse might explain why he goes after heroes since it is likely he wished heroes would save him, but they never did.”}

"I mean yeah, but I think I always knew they were only human." Izuku comments. "Though that might just be because I analyzed their weaknesses."

{Tsukauchi nodded, “I’ll run a list of domestic violence survivors with green eyes. That’ll at least give us a start, since it’s most likely the violence happened in the home, and then we can expand the search if that doesn’t turn up any leads.”}

"Except he likely never reported anything." Tsukauchi comments.

"Or was ignored if he did." Aizawa growls.

{“Make sure you cross-reference that list with anyone with connections to the Yakuza.” Nighteye said. “Mastermind only got involved with this because Overhaul threatened someone, which means he does have people he cares about. Whether they know his identity is still up in the air.”}

"She doesn't." Nedzu remarks.

{Nedzu clapped his hands together, “Perfect! I do believe we are closer to catching this monster now than ever before!”}

"That's not saying much." Mirko scoffs.

{Tsukauchi tried to rub the budding headache out of his forehead, this case was terrible. Nothing for months and then their best leads come from an unlucky little girl. He needed a break, “Hey Nedzu, how is your search for Todoroki coming?”}

"Oh right they still think I'm a prisoner." Todoroki remembers.

{Nedzu frowned and shook his head, “Not well. The league has practically disappeared since we took down All for One and there are no leads on any of the members. I hate thinking of one of my best students being held captive for this long.” He shivered slightly. “But the alternative is worse. At this point, we are having to confront the possibility that Todoroki may be dead. With Shigaraki’s disintegration quirk to dispose of the body, we would never even know.”}

"A terrifying thought." Ojiro comments.

{Tsukauchi sighed, “Do you have any leads on why he was taken? Has Endeavor received any ransom demands?”

Nedzu shook his head, “We still think that is most likely why he was taken, but perhaps they are waiting for things to calm down a bit before they enact the second part of their plan.” He sighed. “Endeavor isn’t helping the investigation either. He simply blames us for letting his son get kidnapped and then not being able to find him. He doesn’t seem to care that we have zero leads and he puts everyone on edge, always hanging around and saying hateful things whenever he is at UA. Having a student kidnapped is a nightmare scenario and something I hoped never to have to deal with when I became principal, but it’s even worse that the victim is so high profile.”}

"That last comment is in poor taste." Nedzu frowns.

"But understandable." Tsukauchi comforts.

{“How are the other students dealing with it?” Nighteye asked.

“Not very well.” Nezu frowned. “We have every member of class 1A meeting with Hound Dog weekly, but they still feel Todoroki’s absence sharply. I believe they have started mourning him. The last time I checked, they had set up a small memorial on his desk. They change the flowers every few days. Other than that, they have been adjusting well to the dorm system and there haven’t been any more major incidents, so it’s going about as well as we can hope for.”}

"Is it weird I'm touched by the memorial thing?" Todoroki asks.

"I think it might be weird if you weren't." Shinsou mentions.

"And a little insulting." Uraraka remarks.

"We may not say it, kero, but you're our friend and we love you." Tsu informs him.

"You would be greatly missed." Iida agrees.

"Our lives wouldn't be the same without you." Izuku insists.

"And we're getting there." Mei holds her arm around Shinsou's shoulders to implicate him too.

{“It’ll take time.” Nighteye said sadly. “Hopefully we will find him soon. If what we just learned leads us to Mastermind, perhaps he’ll be able to lead us to the league.”}

"Press X to doubt." Kaminari quips.

"X"
"X"
"X"
"X"
"X"
"X"
"X"

{Tsukauchi nodded absently. He couldn’t let himself get his hopes up that they would find All Might’s killer, not when Mastermind was so slippery. Who knows, Todoroki had a strong quirk, so maybe he would be able to escape and find his way back to them. But Eri’s words echoed in his head as he said goodbye to Nighteye and Nedzu and sat down to do paperwork on the Overhaul massacre.

Even strong people get hurt sometimes.}

"Well that's ominous." Dabi snarks.

Meanwhile...

"*Now* it's bee time." Mic reminds.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

I love how everyone pointed out I forgot Mastermind while also forgetting Eri's interview.

V:tGG Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Izuku researches more about the robotic bee he found.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: the Green Guide

Bees

{After dinner, Izuku finally had a moment to inspect the robotic bee he'd found. He'd have to give it to Eraserhead later, but he may as well find out as much about it as he could before then. It was the least he could do after all the trouble he'd caused Eraser last night.}

"That wasn't your fault." Aizawa groans.

{He took the ziplock out of his bag and looked at it. At first glance, it seemed to be made of metal, but the longer he looked, the more it seemed like that couldn't be quite right. It didn't seem as shiny as it should be, which could be explained by some sort of matte finish, but that didn't explain the way that some parts of the bee seemed to be almost deteriorating as if the bee itself were actually organic.}

"How odd." Momo remarks.

{Izuku got out a notebook and jotted down a few ideas. He obviously didn't have the tools to break down the chemistry of the robot in his room, but there were many quirks that granted control over technology. There were also quirks that created metal-like alloys from the user's blood or tissue. Knowing that it was completely possible that this bee was actually the result of a quirk, which would make it both organic and inorganic at the

same time. And if it was the result of a quirk, there might be some mention of it in the news, especially if this quirk user had dosed people similarly in the past.}

"And so the research segment begins." Kaminari narrates dramatically.

{Over the next hour, Izuku found quite a few similar quirks, including one that allowed the user to control any living bees they came in contact with through pheromones, which was super cool and had Izuku reaching toward his notebook, but the most noteworthy belonged to a villain that had gained the moniker of Queen Bee a few years in Naruhata. There were several conflicting stories, considering that the people who controlled the bees seemed to have multiple quirks, which just wasn't possible. The most likely theory was that Queen Bee was actually some sort of parasite that infected a host. The host could still use their original quirk, but the parasite created a sort of hive mind that the Queen herself controlled.}

"His mind is *terrifying*." Tsukauchi intones.

"I take it that information is accurate." All Might remarks.

"Yes Toshinori it is." Naomasa informs.

{It was a fascinating quirk and Izuku wondered how the heroes would even counter that. Maybe if they destroyed the queen? But there was always the possibility that another bee would simply become the queen, so if that was the case, they would have to find some way to track down every bee and destroy them, which would be pretty much impossible. It was a shame that such a powerful quirk was being used for evil. Izuku could think of so many ways that it could help people. The bees seemed to be able to hold small amounts of any liquid, so they could administer life-saving medicine, or even antidotes if a villain with a poisonous quirk attacked. Considering the hive mind, the host could most likely use the bees to spy and gather valuable intelligence by being an almost literal fly on the wall because no one ever paid attention to bugs. It was such a cool quirk!}

"I wonder if he's ever gone on rambles like that for us." Toga says dreamily.

Shigaraki scoffs "As if he could my quirk could ever be heroic."

"One way to find out." Dabi smirks "Yo hero kid! How could Decay be

used for heroics?"

Izuku hears the challenge and rises to it. "It's perfect for search and rescue. Especially in building collapses and landslides. Since we've seen him use it on layers and limiting the spread, not to mention if he can direct the spread. He could tunnel through solid earth, dirt, and rocks. Not to mention strategically removing rubble to access trapped individuals." He looks over the villains and glances at Shinsou. "I'll say this as many times as I need to, there is no such thing as a villainous quirk."

The League reels in the silence that follows.

> {Izuku took the bee out of the bag and tried to see if there was any way to hack into it. It probably didn't have a hard line, but since it had robotic elements, it most likely had some way to communicate with its queen, which meant that Izuku could slip in and hopefully get into the bee's head. Of course, since the bee was quirk-made, there was a possibility that the robotic look was just a side effect and it was impossible to hack in, but it was worth a try, at least.}

"Is he actually going to do this?" Ojiro asks.

> {It took a lot of experimentation and it was almost time for bed when Izuku finally managed to wirelessly connect to the bee's...brain? Hard drive? Most of the files were corrupted, which was understandable considering how mangled the bee itself was, but Izuku did manage to find one called Directives. After quickly checking for viruses and trackers, which didn't turn up anything, Izuku opened the file.
>
> *If (Abdomen = full) {Inject any human}*
>
> *Else {return to hive}*}

"He did it!" Mic exclaims jumping out of his seat. "This kid *hacked* a quirk, and there are people who had the *audacity* to call him an idiot! To call him stupid! To convince him he was! He accidentally finished some of his online classes early hacked into the city camera system, hacked the hero coms, and now has straight up hacked a quirk."

"Mic you need to calm down." Aizawa warns.

Mic scoffs "No, I don't think I do, not with the knowledge I have now. Hell, I don't even know why I'm here. Because the other teachers are?

Because I know you personally? At this point being married to you in Cheat Code is the only real reason I can think of."

"But not the only reason." Headcase speaks up. "And just because you're not important to these stories yet doesn't mean you won't be. After all, Mirko and Hawks haven't even appeared on screen yet."

"Yet?" Mirko grins.

"Yet." Headcase confirms.

"And the reason Backdraft and Death Arms was sent home?" Yamada questions.

Headcase shrugs "I honestly overestimated their importance from those early chapters. I may have to bring them back if they somehow become important again."

"So if someone wasn't important when you summoned us you'd what? Summon them and ask us to catch them up to speed?" Hawks asks.

"Most likely, but most of the core world's figures are already here. Shinsou, Hatsume, 1-A, 1-B, the Big Three, the UA teachers and principal, Endeavor, Hawks, Mirko, and Gran Torino, Detective Tsukauchi, Viridian and Deku's underground crew, and the League of Villains."

"What about Spinner and Mr. Compress?" Toga cries out.

Headcase freezes eyes narrow slightly clearly thinking. Then she sighs "When I first brought you here neither had put their marks on any of these worlds; this has in fact changed." She smiles at Himiko. "Would you be a dear?"

"Of course!" The girl cheers. The two men pop into the chairs next to her as a soundproof barrier goes up around them.

"Now as I was saying importance isn't the only factor in being brought here. Most of the teachers won't feature and are here so they can better understand and guide their students. I didn't even know about some of the underground crew, most likely by design, until viewing these stories myself." Headcase informs calmly.

"So we are either important or have something to learn or both." Mic starts to calm down.

"And/or I simply like you. As in even if you didn't feature and had nothing to learn I'd still invite you." The entity smiles softly.

"So you're a fan!" Hawks grins teasingly.

She snorts "We wouldn't be here if I wasn't." Headcase scans the room as a whole. "Why else would I make all This?" She gestures around.

As she leaves Mic whispers to her " Thank you."

{There were a few more commands, but that was the one that stood out to Izuku the most. That meant that the instant villains really were random victims, not simply using the bees as some sort of alternate injection method to get high. But why? What did Queen Bee stand to gain by turning random people into villains?}

"That's fucked up."
"So not manly."
"Hello, nightmares."

{Of course, finding more information on Queen Bee led him down a rabbit hole of the instant villain craze that had happened in Naruhata. Just like what was happening right now, unsuspecting civilians were being dosed with trigger to cause chaos. On the surface, it seemed that Queen Bee was one of those villains that simply enjoyed causing senseless destruction, and that would have been the end of it, except for the fact that people called Next Level Villains popped up a little after that.}

"'Next Level Villains?" Uraraka questions with worry.

"That doesn't sound good." Izuku mumbles to himself.

{The Next Level Villains had all been instant villains at one time or another, but then disappeared. They reappeared a few months later manifesting permanent changes from human experimentation and dosed with huge quantities of trigger. Thankfully, they didn't have any permanent mental changes after the drug wore off and were mostly able to return to their normal lives, but none of them remembered being kidnapped or who had experimented on them.}

"Oh joy, *more* human experimentation, just what we needed." Jiro snarked.

{Izuku frowned. The people behind this operation obviously had

some goals in mind. Their experiments were leading to something, the only question was, what? It couldn't be the Next Level villains, because then the instant villains would have stopped after those appeared in Naruhata. Were they trying to find a way to make quirks more powerful? But trigger did that on its own. So maybe trying to find a way to make a quirk permanently more powerful?}

"Uh, terrible thought; are these like..." Denki pauses to find the right words "trial runs for the Nomu?"

"I mean maybe?" Ashido comments.

"Kamino dude can't be the only one looking into illegal quirk stuff right?" Sero points out.

"Only one way to find out." Bakugo gestures to the screen.

{That made a lot more sense. Izuku was sure that many people with weak quirks would be willing to go through a lot of pain, and probably pay a lot of money, if they could have their quirks become permanently stronger. It did provide a motive.}

"Worse if the strong ones do it, kero." Tsu comments obviously thinking back to the raid.

{But then why have the instant villains? If they wanted to make the stronger quirks permanent, then why go through the trouble of dosing random people with a temporary drug, unless...unless they were using these incidents to evaluate victims for their experiments. They would be able to see which people had promising quirks and see how they reacted to the drug, then kidnap them later. Queen Bee wasn't creating instant villains to cause chaos and fear among the public and heroes, she was scouting out potential victims for the next round of experiments.}

"Wasn't one of the guys from villain rehab an instant villain?" Sato asks.

"Then we better not get attached." Hagakure pouts.

{Izuku jumped as his vigilante alarm went off. Had he really been doing this half the night? Izuku stood and stretched, wincing as his back popped. He'd been in front of a screen for hours and really didn't want to spend another few hours sitting in the same position. He felt so selfish because he was supposed to be helping

people, even if it meant that he was in pain, but he just couldn't bring himself to sit back down. If only he could go out on the streets again.}

"Oh no." Izuku groans.

{Izuku paused and looked at his cast. The doctor said six weeks, and it had really only been around five, but...well, his arm was probably mostly healed by now. He should be fine to run around now, as long as he was careful to avoid getting into any fights. Izuku tried to talk himself out of going out, but apparently, he'd been going more stir-crazy over the past few weeks than he'd thought. Something about being homeschooled was making him even more restless to go out and run from the heroes.}

"Problem Child." Aizawa sighs.

"I know sensei, I know." Midoriya hangs his head.

{Izuku dug his vigilante outfit out from the back of his closet and put it on, making sure he had a few marbles. It probably wouldn't be the best to use his slingshot until he got the cast off, so he didn't need enough for ammo, but he did need enough to let the heroes know it was him! He also grabbed the robotic bee from where it was sitting on his table, putting it back in the ziplock bag. This would be the perfect time to hand it over to Eraserhead and share what he'd just found out!}

"Go to bed." The adults' command, joined by many of his classmates.

{By the time Izuku left the apartment, he was buzzing with nervous energy. As he took off toward his patrol route, he couldn't help the wide smile that spread across his face. He'd really missed this.}

"How nice." Compress comments.

"I have so many questions." Spinner scratches his head.

"Save it for after Shadows. We'll be going to bed then anyway." Shigaraki dismisses.

"That's the villainous heroes story right?" Spinner asks.

"Yep!" Toga chirps.

"It appears the next episode is beginning." Mr. Compress points out.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

I've come to understand that the Viridian chapters are the most skipped.
I have also realized that I am apparently a petty bitch.
🍒 Here's to confusing the skippers.

CC:SS Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

The day after the USJ.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Friendship

{They canceled school the day after the USJ attack to increase security,}

"You got to see the boss's debut?" Spinner asks.

"Yeah, twice actually, we'll tell you about it later." Toga whispers.

{_ which meant that Izuku was bored. Normally, he'd be taking notes on heroes or cool quirks that he saw on the news, but all that the news was covering was the attack, and he...wasn't quite ready to think about that yet. He knew that he should analyze Shigaraki's quirk or Kurogiri's warp quirk or even the Nomu's mess of quirks, but every time he thought about the whole attack, he just froze.}

"Now that I'm not focused on security, I'm struck with the thought that your class should have had counseling following the USJ." Hound Dog grumbles.

"They'll definitely have some when we get back." Aizawa agrees.

{_ Hound Dog had pulled both him and Mei aside before they left school the day before and warned him that something like that might happen and that it was normal and expected, but he still felt guilty and frustrated. He didn't understand it! It's not like the villain's quirks weren't interesting! He just...couldn't bring himself to think about them without panicking about the fact that he'd

challenged a powerful villain or thinking through everything he did wrong that led to Thirteen and Eraserhead being hurt.}

"We're gonna need to watch him for that survivor's guilt." Jiro points out.

"Indeed, though in our career it's something we all may face." Momo warns.

{What he really wanted to do was work on his quirk reports for the first years, but that required the notebooks in his workroom and the students' files, which could only be accessed from a UA computer. He'd already emailed Nedzu asking if he could come in and work on them, but had been told to take a well-deserved rest, so he'd, only half-jokingly, texted Mei and asked if she'd be down to help him break into UA.}

"That'd be so much fun!" Mei cheers.

"Please don't." Iida begs.

{She'd said no.}

"Thank God." Iida sighs.

{So here Izuku was, scrolling through his keep-watching section of Netflix for the fifth time because nothing sounded good. It sucked.}

"That's such a mood." Kaminari chuckles.

{Izuku was just debating whether it'd be worth it to get takeout for lunch when someone started pounding on the door. Izuku jumped a foot in the air and somehow ended up hiding behind the couch. Had the villains found him somehow? Was his poor attempt at a persona not enough to hide him.}

"Oh no." Kouda whispers.

{Izuku frowned as the person outside knocked again. Shigaraki wouldn't knock. He'd just disintegrate the door. Same with Kuroguri. If he knew where Izuku lived, he'd warp straight into the house. But if it wasn't the villains, then who could it be?}

"Mei."
"Mei."

"It's Mei."
"Gotta be Mei."

{"Izu-kun! I swear to God if you went to UA on your own!"}

Izuku gasps dramatically. "I would never!" Hand to his chest and a giant grin earns him a smack to the shoulder.

{Izuku squeaked and raced to throw open the door and let Mei in. She already had her arm raised to knock again while Shinso stood next to her looking slightly lost. Mei didn't waste any time pushing past him and dragging him back into his apartment by the hand.}

"You just have no concept of personal space, do you?" Shinsou asks.

"I don't have time for that!" Mei defends.

"Even if you scare off clients because of it?" Izuku challenges.

Mei freezes "That's a good point Izu-Kun. I'll have to work on that."

{“M-Mei-Chan!” Izuku stuttered. “Not that I’m not happy, but why are you here?”

“Making sure you don’t do something stupid, apparently.” Shinso deadpanned.}

Dabi snorts. "Shame he's a hero kid, I like his sass."

{“Hey!” Izuku gave him a glare, then started grumbling under his breath, “It’s not like I would have broken into UA on my own, that’d be stupid.”

Shinso raised an eyebrow, “Like breaking into UA at all wouldn’t be.”

“Yeah, Izu-Kun!” Mei said. “Look what happened to those villains yesterday! They had to deal with you!”}

"I'm gonna give that girl classified information classes." Majima grumbles.

{“Mei-Chan! That’s supposed to be a secret!” Izuku glanced over at Shinso in a panic, but he just shrugged.

“She already told me you guys were involved when she texted me

and dragged me here." Shinso said. "And it's not like everyone didn't already know there was an attack. Honestly, I'm not even surprised, you two are like...chaotic deities or something. Plus, there had to be a reason why I found you cuddling under your desk during lunch instead of eating."}

"Shinsou!" Izuku cries out in embarrassment.

{Mei cackled over the sound of Izuku spluttering, "Oh Extra-Credit-Kun! You know us so well already! Plus, I had to tell him because I needed an extra brain."

Shinso's eyes widened slightly before almost immediately going back to his default bored expression, "You really need to practice not sounding ominous."}

"What he said." Shinsou drawls.

{"Eh, that's boring." Mei shrugged and slammed her notebook open on the coffee table, "Look that these!"

Izuku and Shinso both leaned over the notebook and Izuku froze when he realized what was inside, "What...Mei-chan! I don't need a logo!"}

"Everyone can use a logo." Midnight grins.

"Not everyone likes attention the way you do." Aizawa huffs.

{Mei scoffed, "Of course, you need a logo, Izu-Kun! Imagine! Heroes are looking for the perfect analyst to help them on an important mission. Who else are they gonna pick besides Cheat Code! The victor of the USJ!"}

"It is a boon to his reputation." Nedzu agrees.

{Shinso didn't bother hiding his laughter as Izuku blushed and covered his face with his arms, "Mei-chan!"

"Hence why I needed Shinso." Mei huffed. "So! Extra-Credit-Kun! Which of these ideas is your favorite?"}

"Hey!"

{"Hey!"

Shinso grinned at him and pulled the notebook toward him,

“Hmm...oooh, these are cool!”}

"Show us, show us, show us." Ashido and Kaminari chant.

{“Yep!” Mei grinned. “I’m thinking about making stamps, maybe even a paper embosser, you know, one of those texture things that leaves an imprint on the page?”

“Oh, I like that idea!” Shinso said, still grinning. The traitor. He was enjoying this, wasn’t he?}

"You know, I really am." Shinsou teases.

{“Me too!” Mei said. “It’ll be perfect for when Izu-Kun finishes his reports on the first years because then he can just put his logo on the final page and…”

Izuku finally got enough control over his vocal cords to stop mindlessly sputtering and interrupt the two before they plotted to make him famous or something, “Guys! Don’t I get any say in this?”

“Of course, Izu-Kun!” Mei said sweetly. “You can pick the logo.”}

"That is *not* what I meant!" Izuku exclaims.

{Izuku scowled at her, but when she didn’t give in, he sighed and pulled the notebook toward him. Shinso wasn’t lying, they were really cool. There were a few in various stages of completion from where Mei had obviously gotten bored before finishing them, but they still gave him a really good idea of what was going through her head as she designed them. She had obviously tried to lean into the gamer aesthetic with Cheat Code, which Izuku could appreciate, even if he really didn’t want a logo.}

"Woah." Kaminari says impressed.

{A few of them were based on the d-pad from video game controllers, with different colors on each button. A few of them looked more like crosses, while others had buttons and others were more stylized. One even showed the d-pad on the controller, which Izuku thought was a nice touch, even if it made the logo look a little busy. Another one had the same problem, even though it went with a more hacking or PC gaming aesthetic. It was a laptop, and on the screen, it had his codename written as if it was a piece of coding. There were only a few keys on the

keyboard, though...just the A, the B, and the spacebar, which said Start for some reason. }

"I like the colored d-pad." Kaminari remarks.

"The cross ones are more my speed." Sero considers.

"Does he not know the Konami code?" Ashido asks.

"Wrong kind of nerd." Bakugo huffs.

{“Mei, why is this computer so weird?” Izuku finally asked. “I wouldn’t be able to code anything with that keyboard! And why just those keys?”

“It’s because it’s based on a famous cheat code.” Shinso said. When Mei and Izuku both turned to stare at him, he shrugged defensively, “What? No one wanted to play with the future villain, so I ended up spending a lot of time playing video games.”}

"But their so much more fun *with* friends. Hagakure whines.

{“No one wanted to play with me either, but I ended up chasing hero fights.” Izuku pointed out.

“And I ended up inventing.” Mei added. “But that’s not important! Didn’t you look at how Cheat Code is written?!”

Izuku leaned down to see the paper a little better, “Y-you mean the arrows on some of the letters.”}

"This is sad." Spinner comments.

"And this is one of the happier stories." Dabi brushes him off.

"That is in no way comforting." Compress sighs.

{“Ugh!” Mei groaned. “Izu-Kun, you’re hopeless! I thought you were supposed to be super nerdy!”}

"Wrong kind of nerd apparently." Jiro chuckles.

{“That doesn’t mean I know everything about video games!” Izuku yelled.

“I spent forever on that!”

“I”m sorry!”

“It’s a stylized version of the Konami code.” Shinso interrupted. “Up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, b, a, start. The arrows are all in your codename. Two ups on the h, two downs on the A, one left and one right on the T, and another left and right on the E. Then the rest of the code is on the keyboard. It’s a nice touch.”}

Shigaraki tries to hide his grin while the League pretends not to notice it.

{“O-oh.” Izuku looked a little closer. “That makes sense.”

The more he looked at it, he really liked the stylized way that one was written, with the arrows paying homage to a real cheat code. Honestly, it looked kinda badass, like it was something that Katsuki would be jealous of.}

"I don't do jealous." Katsuki scoffs.

{Which obviously meant that Izuku had to have it.}

"Damn."
"He did say he'd be petty."
"Approved."
"Get it!"
"Hahahahahahahaha!"

{He still didn’t like the laptop though, “Would it be possible to combine that writing with one of the others?”

“Of course!” Mei said excitedly. “One of the advantages of that one is that you could just use it on its own and use it as a signature if anyone ever asks for your autograph!"

...and now he was blushing again, “Mei-chan! I’m an analyst! No one’s ever going to ask me for my autograph!”}

"Bet." Ojiro remarks.

{“Never say never, Izu-kun!” Mei cackled.

“Can we just pick one to combine it with?” Izuku pouted.

“I like this one.” Shinso pointed to the page, “Though I’m also partial to the ones with glitching effects, but they would be hard

to use as a signature."

"I'm not going to be signing anything!" Izuku insisted. He looked at the logo Shinso was pointing to, which was one of the d-pad-inspired ones. Each button was like an arrow pointing to the center and the top three were purple, green, and pink, while the bottom one just said Cheat Code. "I like it, but what do the colors mean?"

"They're us!" Mei said proudly.

Shinso blinked at her, "...what?"

"See!" Mei gestured animatedly toward the page, "Pink for me! Green for Izu-kun! And purple for Extra-Credit-Kun!"}

"Appreciate the thought, but leave me out of this." Shinsou earns a pout from such a comment.

{Shinso was trying to hide his nervousness under a layer of skepticism, but to Izuku, he just looked slightly nauseous, "Why am I on there?"

Mei shrugged, "I needed another color and you're the first person I thought of."

"We could probably use another color!" Izuku offered quickly. "Why not orange for Powerloader?"}

"Don't drag me into this." The man begs.

{"Then the colors would clash!" Mei complained. "Purple works best."

Izuku really didn't want to make Shinso uncomfortable, which being included on the logo was clearly doing, "How about we just make those three buttons black? Then they'll contrast well with the white button and we can put the styled Cheat Code signature on that one."}

"That sounds cool!" Uraraka gushes.

{"Ooh! I like it!" Mei said. "I still like the color, but black and white will work well too. It's all techie!"

Shinso shot Izuku a grateful look and he smiled back as Mei quickly sketched out the new logo, "What do you think?"

Izuku and Shinso leaned over the page and Izuku couldn't hold back a smile. Even though he still didn't think he needed a logo, it had turned out pretty cool and it was a fun thing to do with his friends. He liked it.}

"I'm adding logos to the list of class projects I have going." Ashido informs.

{"Now all that's left is to engrave it onto everything you own." Shinso said with a shit-eating grin.

Nevermind. Next time they needed to pull Shinso out of class, Izuku was going to send Mei. See how he liked being called Extra-Credit-Kun in front of his whole class. What? He was just practicing being petty!}

"Mean." Shinsou fake pouts.

"Hey you're asking for it." Izuku defends.

"Never said I wasn't." He quips back. "One more than we can sleep right?"

"If we're sticking to the pattern." Izuku agrees. "I can't wait to see our plans though."

"Same." Shinsou adds "Oh, it's starting."

Now Playing

S:THMH Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

First blood.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: the Horror Movie Heroes

Heartbeat

{Kyoka froze as the entire cafe turned on her. The heroes weren't there yet, but they were trying to make this simulation as real as possible, so there was still a possibility that police or even a vigilante might show up. She needed to run, but the only problem was that there was a crowd of people blocking the door. She needed to get them out of her way, like, five minutes ago.}

"How the hell am I gonna get out of this one?" Jiro groans.

{Her heartbeat was rocketing out of control and it gave her an idea. Her eyes flicked around the cafe until she saw a speaker and she immediately shot out her earphone jacks and plugged herself in before anyone could stop her. She projected her heartbeat, but the speaker didn't have enough power to blow anyone out of the way. The people in the cafe were getting even more defensive than they had been before and were becoming just as anxious as she was. Her heartbeat beat a little faster as it echoed loudly through the cafe. This wasn't good.}

"Oh?" Izuku perks up.

"What? What do you see?" Jiro demands.

"Just wait, I need a bit more info." Izuku calms.

{"We need to get her. Now!" One of the civilians cried out.

“When do the heroes get here?!”

“Not for a couple hours.” Someone yelled. “We need to take care of this ourselves!”}

"The HUC aren't usually this intense." Mic comments.

"No they aren't." Aizawa focuses on the screen.

{Kyoka’s heartbeat increased again and within a few minutes, the mob surrounding her was even more frightened and that pushed them to be even more aggressive. This was just an exercise, why were they acting so aggressively? She unplugged one of her earphone jacks and swiveled it around to listen to everyone’s heartbeats and froze.}

Izuku leans forward.

{Everyone’s heartbeat was in sync with hers.}

”What the hell?” Jiro asks.

{Kyoka’s eyes widened. She’d read a paper once that the human heartbeat will often change to match strong music or another person’s heartbeat if they’re near enough. Was that what was happening? There was only one way to find out. Kyoka took a deep breath and focused on calming down and slowing her heart rate.

The effect was almost immediate. She’d always had some control over her heartbeat, but it seemed oddly easier today and the mob actually did calm down in sync with her as she slowed the rhythm she was projecting. She gulped and focused on projecting a calming beat as she turned slowly to the cashier, “I’m just here for some food. Give me a pastry and let me be on my way.”

The cashier’s eyes were hazy as she grabbed somebody else’s order and handed it to her, “You seem like a nice young lady. Have a good day.”}

”That’s such a cool enhancement One for All gave you!” Izuku tells Jiro.

”But I thought it was just a physical enhancer?” Jiro questions.

”You did? Why?” Midoriya says confused.

”Well, you have to consider that One for All presented that way in both you *and* Deku’s version of our senpai.” Momo points out.

”Right that makes sense.” Izuku agrees. “One for All usually triggers a quirk evolution. Like All Might told me his master went from floating to flying with hers.”

”So why didn’t that happen with mister sunshine of the Big Three?” Shinsou cuts in.

”Permeation might be at singularity where there’s just no way it can feasibly improve. Or it’s already a pure physical quirk. Or One for All can’t enhance transformation quirks. Could it enhance a mutation? I don’t think that would be safe. The drawbacks might be enhanced too. What about mental quirks? What would happen if I gave it to Shinsou? It might…” Izuku rambles.

”No.” Headcase interrupts firmly. “I’m sorry Hitoshi but I’m afraid One for All doesn’t typically react well to mental quirks. Please return your attention to the screen.”

{“O-ok.” Kyoka turned back to the mob...well, the crowd, now that they'd all calmed down. “Clear me a path to the door, please.”}

Dabi snorts “So polite.”

{There were some nods as people agreeably stood aside and Kyoka considered her next move. It probably wouldn’t take long for them to snap out of it once she stopped projecting her heartbeat, so...she unplugged and booked it, not stopping until she was down the street and around the corner.

Her heartbeat had risen again, but she wasn’t projecting it, so the only person affected was herself as she clutched the paper bag to her chest and sunk down against a brick wall, “What the heck just happened?”}

”Welcome to the wonderful world of One for All.” Izuku chuckles.

{Hitoshi put his hands in his pockets and sauntered through the square while keeping an eye out for his target. He’d stashed most of the weapons somewhere safe and kept one knife and one handgun hidden away just so he didn’t look too suspicious. There were a lot of pink-haired guys wandering around today and he

sighed and discretely pressed his comm, “Izuku, I need a bit more of a detailed description.”}

”Yeah, we have two pink-haired girls in this room, gonna need some more information.” Shinsou snarks.

{“Oh, right…” Izuku’s voice said. “Ok, um, oh! He’s the one sitting at the fountain! His name is Hiroshi Tameda, by the way”

Hitoshi looked over and, sure enough, there was a guy with pink hair sitting at the fountain. He smiled, “Much better. Thanks, Izuku.”

“No problem.” Izuku responded. “Good luck.”}

”Why are they going after some random civilian?” Toru asks.

”Hostage, blackmail, who knows, they’re playing the part of the villains.” Ojirou comments.

{Hitoshi nodded and made his way toward his target, clearing his throat when he got close enough, “Um, hi. Do you know any good places to eat around here?”

Tameda huffed in annoyance, “Well, if you bothered to look around…”

Hitoshi took control with a smile, “Walk beside me.”

Tameda stood up like a puppet and Hitoshi nervously walked beside him, slinging an arm around his shoulder and keeping up a stream of nonsense conversation so they looked like two friends despite the stilted way that Tameda was walking and his blank expression. This was the riskiest part of their entire plan. If someone were to pay attention to them or recall them acting suspiciously and tell the heroes...}

”Bad, very bad.” Sero remarks.

“And disappointing.” Ashido agrees.

{Finally, finally, they got out of sight of the street and Hitoshi breathed a sigh of relief, “Hey, sorry about this dude, but I’m gonna need your token if I want to pass as a civilian.”

He pulled out the gun, making sure the silencer was attached correctly before he took aim. It took him a surprising amount of

mental effort to actually pull the trigger. Even though he knew it was just a paint gun, he was still taking this guy out of the game permanently and it felt real. After a long moment, Hitoshi took a deep breath and fired at his heart.}

”Who would have thought a little hero would have it in them?” Shigaraki chuckles at his struggle.

Dabi gives him a look “Do you honestly think heroes don’t kill people?”

Tomura scoffs “I know they do, it’s just not their go-to.”

”At least it shouldn’t be.” Spinner grumbles.

”As they say a few bad apples…” Compress sighs.

{The silence in the viewing room was deafening.}

”That’s a mood.” Mic huffs.

”You’ve been spending too much time with teenagers.” Eraserhead sighs.

{“Did he just…” Mic’s jaw dropped and he looked at the others in shock. “Is he allowed to do that? The heroes haven’t arrived yet.”

“That guy isn't one of the official targets.” Snipe pointed out. “Therefore killing him ain’t an objective and normal crimes ain’t technically disallowed before the heroes arrive.”}

”I do love loopholes.” Nedzu chirps.

{“Yeah, otherwise that Jiro girl would have been disqualified for stealing breakfast.” Midnight said. “I still want to know how she did that. I know her file says she can project her heartbeat, but that was something else!”

“My only question about Shinso is why? ” Aizawa leaned forward. “Why kill a random civilian before the heroes have even arrived.”}

”Is it not obvious?” Nedzu asks.

{“I’m surprised you haven't figured it out yet, Aizawa.” Nedzu said in delight. “But perhaps this will help.”

He projected Tameda's file onto the screen and the teachers watched in shock as the file changed before their eyes, Shinso's face and name replacing Tameda's within just a few seconds.

"I believe we need to officially inform Tameda that he is now deceased." Nedzu smiled. "And I suppose congratulations are in order for Shinso on his civilian disguise."}

"Holy shit! You guys shot someone and stole his identity!" Uraraka cheers.

"It will make things so much easier for them." Todoroki nods in agreement.

{Tameda staggered back and looked at Hitoshi incredulously, "Oi! What the heck, dude?"

"Sorry." Hitoshi said sheepishly. "Can you hand over your token now?"

"What?!" Tameda paused and listened to his comm, then burst out laughing. "I can't believe you seriously just killed me. The exercise hasn't even started yet!"}

"At least he's having good humor about it." Sato remarks.

{"Yeah, well, I kinda need to steal your identity before the heroes get here." Hitoshi shrugged. "So...your token? And thanks for being so cool about everything by the way."

"No problem." Tameda flipped his token like a quarter and made Hitoshi catch it, which he did. "I mean, Endeavor's my favorite hero, so people being jerks doesn't really bother me."}

Shoto and Dabi scowl at the man.

{"Ouch." Hitoshi deadpanned. "Thanks for the vote of confidence."

Tameda laughed, "Ok, but you better win this. If you're forcing me out of the game this early, you have to at least have something to show for it."

Hitoshi grinned, "Oh, don't worry. We will."}

"By the time we graduate your grin will give Aizawa's a run for his

money, kero.” Asui claims.

”Good.” Shinsou smirks.

{Izuku breathed a sigh of relief. After completing Hitoshi’s file just minutes after their first kill, he’d pointed out another target and now they had two civilian tokens and the files to match a whole hour before the heroes were set to arrive. Perfect.

“Ok, Hitoshi, um, I’m gonna change out of my villain gear and try to find us a place to live for the week.” Izuku said. “Can you get us groceries and meet me there?”

“Sure thing, Izuku.” Hitoshi responded. “And we’re sitting out the mad rush at the beginning, right?”}

”That would be best.” Izuku comments with a leading lit to his voice.”

”Indeed, however observing said mad rush would be most beneficial.” Iida agrees.

{“Well, not sitting out.” Izuku said slowly.

Hitoshi sighed, “We’re watching the whole thing via the cameras aren’t we.”

Izuku smiled, “Well how else are we supposed to get to know our competition?”}

“I believe the term is ‘called it’.” Tenya remarks.

Shinsou stands and stretches, turning toward the dorms labeled ‘Others’. “As nice as this has been, I’m beat.”

“Looks like everyone else agrees.” Uraraka comments getting up to head to the 1-A door.

“Except for the villains, they seem a little busy.” Mei points out. The group turns to see Toga and Twice enthusiastically telling Spinner and Mr. Compress about what’s happened so far. Shigaraki grabs the backs of their shirts to drag them toward their dorm without the two storytellers stopping. Dabi trails after them chuckling before glancing over at Shoto and hurrying ahead still avoiding him.

After a good night's rest the theater settles to see what comes next.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Day 7

D?ITHSP... Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Alarms and a joint training with 1B.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

Deku? I think he's some pro...?

Fight!

{Izuku had decided he didn't really do well in crowds. It was one thing if he was just another person elbowing for room in front of a hero fight, but it seemed to be another entirely when dozens of eyes were trained on him, all waiting for some sort of eloquent response.}

"Me? Eloquent?" Izuku asks to the chagrin of his friends.

{"What's it like having All Might as a teacher?"}

"At first it was obvious he didn't know what he was doing," Tsu states bluntly "He's doing marginally better though."

{Ok, yeah, he totally got why Eraser called them vultures, now. He didn't even like All Might that much, but he couldn't say that because then everyone would hate him because who doesn't like All Might and, oh, he just should have stayed home today.

"Umm…" he managed finally, "it's fine…."}

Midoriya gestures to the screen, pointing out how *eloquent* he is to his friends.

{The reporter in front of him huffed in frustration at his non-answer and tossed her ponytail over her shoulder, "Then maybe you can help us with some other rumors we've been hearing. You're a hero course student, right?"}

"I don't like where this is going." Eraserhead comments narrowing his eyes in suspicion.

{“Yes…”

The reporter got a wicked gleam in her eye that made Izuku take an involuntary step back, “Is it true that there was a quirkless student admitted to the hero course this year?”}

"Abort mission!"
"How did they know that!?"
"Who the hell blabbed!?"

{Izuku’s eyes widened. How did they know that? Were the admissions records public? They couldn’t be, right? Then how did they know that there was a quirkless student in the hero course? Did one of his friends blab? One of his classmates? One of his teachers? Did they know they were talking to the quirkless student or was this just a terribly unlucky coincidence? What if…}

"Mayday, mayday, mayday!"
"Quick! Somebody take the attention off him!"
"He's starting to spiral!"

{“Aren’t these uniforms tres *chique* ?”}

"Aoyama coming in clutch!" Ashido cheers.

{Izuku whipped his head around to see Aoyama practically posing for the media, something that the photographers were eating up. The reporter glanced at Izuku before shoving her mic into the face of a much more willing victim.}

"I don't think I ever thanked you for doing that before so thank you, Aoyama." Izuku turns to Yuga to address him.

"Non thanks needed," Aoyama replies "some of us are simply more comfortable in the spotlight than others."

{“What’s it like having All Might as a teacher?”

“Well, I’d say it’s absolutely spectacular.” Aoyama gave a dazzling smile and Izuku wondered if his belly button laser could give sparkle to other parts of his body? Would it be possible for him to learn to shoot lasers from his teeth or eyes?}

"Really, Deku?" Ochaco sighs earning a sheepish smile from her friend.

{_“He’s such a beautiful hero. A bit too muscley in my humble opinion, but that is an unfortunate side effect of strength quirks, isn’t it?” He gave a tinkling laugh and Izuku took the opportunity to run past the UA gates. Aoyama caught his eye and winked as he passed him before turning back and continuing to answer the media’s questions like it was what he’d been born to do.}

"That's because it is." Yuga flourishes.

{Once Izuku got inside the school, he stopped running and sighed. Yeah, maybe it was a good thing he didn’t get a quirk. He didn’t think he’d be able to handle being a daylight hero, and he probably wouldn’t have even realized underground was an option if he’d gotten an amazing quirk like All Might’s. Or All Might’s quirk. He shook his head. Hopefully, Toogata was really good at interacting with the media.}

"I'll do my very best." Mirio promises "Once I get my quirk back."

"That might be awhile, Eri hasn't even started quirk counseling." Amajiki reminds him solemnly.

"That just means we have to be patient!" Nejire chirps "We can do that." Earning a laugh from Togata.

{Morning classes weren’t that interesting, just picking a student rep, which Izuku wasn’t interested in at all, especially not after trying to talk to the media this morning, but he did have a productive lesson with Nedzu about identifying weak points in public opinion, which was fun. Katsuki stayed away from him, ignoring him for the most part while glaring straight ahead, which Izuku could deal with much easier than him coming after him palms blazing like he had the first day. He still seemed angry, but Izuku figured that he’d only had one or two therapy visits by now, so he probably couldn’t expect any meaningful changes yet.}

Bakugo cringes at the reminder.

{Before Izuku knew it, it was time for lunch again. Iida, Uraraka, and Yaoyorozu still insisted on joining him, which confused Izuku to no end, but he wasn’t complaining. Yaoyorozu also usually dragged Todoroki along with her, but he didn’t seem to care where he sat either way, so they tried to include him in their

conversations as much as they could. His one-word answers ranged from polite to hilariously wrong, but Izuku hadn't gotten up the courage to laugh at him yet, not when Todoroki was powerful enough to destroy him with just a thought, but he figured that if things kept going the way they were, he might be able to tentatively call Todoroki a friend somewhere in the middle of their second year.}

"And then the sports festival happened." Izuku chirped with a chuckle.

"Oh yes, the trauma dump via your 'therapy friend' aura." Todoroki deadpans.

"No joke, that's probably why I started ranting the way I did during our match." Shinsou agrees.

"Always happy to help." Izuku reminds the group.

{They were just congratulating Yaoyorozu on her win as student rep when an alarm went off.

"Level three security breach. All students please exit the building in an orderly fashion."

Izuku looked at the others in confusion, "What's a level three security breach?"}

"Trespassers." Iida sighs.

{Uraraka shrugged and the others didn't seem to know either. A student who was eating at the table next to them had apparently overhead their question and turned to them, "It means somebody managed to get inside the gates. I've been here three years and this is the first time it's happened!"

They hurried to the doors, only to get caught in a bottleneck at the entrance to the cafeteria.}

"Your future heroes everybody." Tomura scoffs. The snickering of the league surrounds him.

{"I'm getting crushed!" Uraraka shouted.

"Hold onto each other!" Yaoyorozu tried to grab at the others, but a massive wave passed through the crowd and they got separated. Izuku tried to keep sight of the others, but all his energy was

going into not being trampled and making sure he didn't trip. He was starting to panic, but the other bodies just kept pushing and trying to get out, so it wasn't like he could actually do anything besides maybe not die.}

"We really should do drills for this." Midnight comments. "Especially this year."

{All of a sudden Iida slammed into the wall above the door hard enough that everyone stopped moving.}

"Emergency Exit Iida!"

{"It's ok! It's just the media outside. There is no reason to panic. Please move more slowly so no one gets hurt!"

Izuku smiled. Iida seemed like a natural-born leader, even if he was a little more uptight than his brother. The crowd started moving more carefully, at a crawl instead of the frantic push that was happening before. Kirishima and Kaminari reached up to grab Iida when they reached him and he didn't start floating again, so Izuku figured Uraraka must have returned his gravity.}

"I really did appreciate someone stopping to catch me as I had not considered how I would get down until then." Iida states with some relief in his voice.

{They all gathered outside on the lawn and the class reps made sure everyone was accounted for as the students watched the media get escorted from the premises. Kaminari and Ashido decided to make a game out of it, rating each reporter on how much they resisted and how unrepentant they seemed, yelling it out and commentating it like a sports match. Izuku had the distinct feeling that if there had been popcorn available, the two would have been pelting it at the poor guys.}

"Man, that would have been so much fun." Kaminari whines good-naturedly.

{Aizawa came over shortly after the media was cleared off, his expression the weird mix of exhaustion and annoyance that Izuku knew meant that he was losing patience with human stupidity and that all he wanted to do was sleep, cuddle with a cat, or possibly both. Sometimes even coffee wasn't enough to get him out of one of these moods.}

"Noted." Kaminari chirps.

{“Yo Aizawa!” Kaminari yelled. “Is school canceled the rest of the day because of the break-in?”

Aizawa sighed heavily, “No. Because we have already managed the threat, we’ll be holding afternoon classes as normal. Go get your gym clothes on and meet back out here, we’ll be doing joint training with class 1B.”}

"That's different." Ojiro comments.

{The class hurried to obey and by the time they got back out to the field, the rest of the school had gone back to class just leaving them and the students of class 1B. They were all huddled together sitting on the grass as Vlad King talked to Aizawa. So far, none of them had come over to talk to class 1A, and no one from 1A had gone over to talk to them. As Izuku tried to figure out their quirks, he wondered if it was normal to have joint training this early in the year. Wouldn’t they normally keep the classes apart until their skills were more developed? But, then again, it was probably better to have them together as much as possible to develop camaraderie and to prevent artificial divisions from forming between them…}

"Yes, *artificial* division." Kendo gave Monoma a pointed look as she said this.

{“Shut up, Deku! You’re muttering again!”}

"Leave him alone, jeez." Hagakure groans.

{Izuku flinched at Katsuki’s glare, but he just huffed and turned away rather than coming after him. Maybe the therapy was starting to kick in? Or maybe he was just being careful not to do anything overtly violent in front of the teachers since he was on thin ice right now?}

"Thoughts like that really put into perspective how he acted those first few weeks." Jiro comments.

"Yes, but they seem mostly okay now." Momo comforts.

{“All right everyone.” Aizawa activated his quirk to make sure he had all the quirked student’s attention. “This training is mostly so you get training going against a wide variety of quirks early on.

You'll be doing one on one battles where you can pin, immobilize, or knock out your opponent. No support items allowed unless they are required for you to safely use your quirk."}

"Like my lovely belt." Aoyama comments with a flourish.

{He pulled out his sleeping bag and fell asleep on the grass as Vlad King nodded, "The way this is going to work is through a series of challenges. First, someone from 1A will challenge someone from 1B, then that person will challenge someone from 1A, who will challenge someone from 1B and you get the idea. The class rep of 1A will start us off."}

"What a wonderful exercise. I'll note it down for you." Nedzu remarks.

{Izuku wished he had a notebook as he watched the fights. Class B had such cool quirks and it was interesting to see how the students tried to counter each other, especially since most hadn't had much training in one on one combat and it was infinitely different than fighting robots. Izuku already had a lot of ideas for how everyone could improve and use their quirks more effectively, and they weren't even halfway through the students!}

"Are we gonna get rambles about us?" Awase asks with an excited lit in his voice, hyping up his classmates as well.

{Todoroki had just gotten called up when Izuku heard a groan from among the class B students.

"Ugh, I wanted to challenge him, all the others are going to be boring."

Izuku turned slightly to see a blond boy glaring at Todoroki.}

"Damnit Monoma, don't distract him." Setsuna scolds.

{"Why did you want to fight him so bad?" A girl with red hair asked. "He looks pretty powerful, Monoma."

"That's the point, Kendo." Monoma said. "And it's not so much that I wanted to fight him in particular, but I didn't see him at the exam, which means that he's a recommendation student, which means he has a powerful quirk that I can copy. The more powerful my opponent is, the more powerful I am, it's as simple as that."}

"Arrogant little hero-to-be, isn't he." Spinner scoffs.

{Izuku perked up, a copy quirk? How did it work exactly? Did Monoma have to know what their quirk was in order to copy it? Did he automatically have mastery of the quirk he'd copied? Could the person still use their quirk while it was copied or was it more like their quirk had been stolen? Could he copy multiple quirks at once? Izuku had so many questions.}

"Oh, you've been so mean to him, and look how excited your quirk makes him." Kendo points out with a disappointed tone that has Monoma shrinking in his seat.

{"Actually, 1A has three recommendation students this year." Izuku recognized the girl as the one with the lizard tail quirk from the recommendation exam.}

"That's me!" Setsuna declares with pride.

{"What?" Monoma asked. "Does 1A really think they're that much better than us? Why do they get an extra recommendation student?"}

"Wow, that's one *hell* of a inferiority complex." Dabi snarks.

{"Yeah Setsuna," Kendo said, "it seems kinda weird. I thought there were always four recommendation students."

Setsuna shrugged, "I mean, yeah, usually. They didn't really tell us why there was an extra student this year, just that there was. Don't look, but the extra recommendation student is that kid with curly green hair and freckles."}

"And everyone immediately looks." Vlad sighs.

{Izuku pretended to be very busy watching the matches as the other students glanced in his direction. Maybe he shouldn't be eavesdropping, but it was kinda impossible not to since they were talking about him, Plus Izuku wanted to learn more about Monoma's quirk.}

"Really Midoriya?" Shinsou sighs at his new friend's obsession.

"Yes." Izuku confirms. "And I already have *so* many pages if he ever gets over himself." The squad tries not to laugh at his last comments but a couple of snorts make it through.

{“Him?” Monoma said incredulously. “He doesn’t look like much.”}

"Rude." Sero comments.

{“Keep your voice down!” Setsuna hissed. “And besides, looks don’t always equal power. He almost won a race against someone with a speed quirk. Only lost by a few seconds.”}

"He did?" Spinner asks.

"Yeah! It was super cool!" Toga confirmed.

"I certainly wish I could have seen it for myself. I imagine it was quite the satisfying win." Compress remarks.

"Don't tell me you're rooting for the hero brat." Shigaraki sneers.

"But of course, is it not the point of a story to root for the main character?" Compress asks as though it was obvious.

"Thank you!" Toga cheers. "The spoilsports we're being all angsty when we should be having fun. Though we are supposed to learn things so we gotta pay attention."

"Then let's continue." Compress agrees gesturing toward the screen before anyone else can chime in.

{“Hmm,” Izuku could feel Monoma’s eyes on him as Todoroki challenged his next opponent. “What’s his quirk?”

“He never really said.” Setsuna said. “But I think it’s some kind of enhanced agility. Either that or something that affects his intelligence. He completely destroyed the obstacle course.”}

"And cue a flustered Deku." Ochaco giggles.

{Izuku felt a mix of pride and mortification. On the one hand, it felt good to have others recognize how well he’d done at the entrance exam, but on the other, they still didn’t know he was quirkless, so they’d probably change their tune pretty quickly once they figured it out.}

"Other me better fucking not." Setsuna warns.

{_He shook his head and went back to watching the battles. Eventually, Monoma got challenged by Tokoyami and Izuku

leaned forward in anticipation. This would be the perfect chance to see his copy quirk in action and maybe even answer some of his questions about it.}

"Revelry in the dark." You know who said this.

{As soon as Vlad King said go, Monoma ran at Tokoyami but was blocked by Dark Shadow, who tried to grab him. Monoma dodged at the last minute and ran at Tokoyami again. The fight went on like that for a few minutes, with Monoma gradually getting closer to Tokoyami, who didn't seem to notice. Suddenly, rather than dodging to the side like he had been doing, Monoma ducked under Dark Shadow and grabbed Tokoyami's ankle before jumping back as a dark blue bird burst from his chest and flapped wildly.}

Izuku gasps. "They're a different color!"

{Izuku's face lit up. So Monoma's quirk was activated through physical touch, most likely skin to skin, since he'd grabbed at the sliver of exposed skin on Tokoyami's ankle rather than anywhere else, and he hadn't seemed to be able to copy the quirk by touching Dark Shadow. Monoma's Shadow was still flapping wildly and throwing him off balance as the rest of the students watched in shock.}

"Why can't you control it?" Kendo asks.

"Probably because the quirk is sentient." Monoma pouts.

{"Stupid bird." Monoma growled. "Why won't you do what I want?"

So his quirk didn't grant him automatic mastery of any quirk he copied. Nice to know, though Izuku figured that'd make it kinda difficult to use it in combat. Maybe there was a way to store quirks for later use so he could learn to use them? The fight didn't last much longer since Tokoyami took advantage of Monoma's distraction to have Dark Shadow immobilize him.}

Monoma groans "And how exactly am I going to store quirks?"

{Vlad King called the match and Dark Shadow let go of Monoma, who was growing increasingly frantic as his Shadow started trying to claw at anyone close enough, including Monoma himself. There was a groan as Aizawa sat up and glared at

Monoma with his quirk, making the Shadow disappear as Monoma sighed in relief. Aizawa just rolled his eyes and laid back down, except now Izuku was starting to doubt he was actually asleep. Pretending to be asleep just to spy on his students totally seemed like something he'd do, actually, now that Izuku was thinking about it.}

"Called out!" Joke chuckles with a grin.

{You fought admirably." Tokoyami said. "Dark Shadow is notoriously difficult to tame."

"Whatever." Monoma scoffed. "Just because you can't control it doesn't mean I can't."}

"No, that's exactly what it means." Satou huffs.

{"But you couldn't control it." Tsu said helpfully.

Monoma opened his mouth to offer a scathing reply, but Vlad King cut him off before he could, "Alright, Monoma. It's your turn to pick your opponent."

"Oh, that's easy." Monoma laughed haughtily and pointed at Izuku. "I pick him."}

"Oh look, humble soup, my favorite." Monoma says with false cheer.

{Izuku's eyes widened in shock and he pointed to himself, "Me?"

Monoma rolled his eyes, "Nice to know even the recommendation students in 1A are idiots."}

"You do realize that you deserve what's about to happen to you right?" Shishida points out. To which Monoma scowls.

{Oh, Izuku grimaced as he stood, Monoma probably thought he had a powerful quirk just because he got in on recommendations. This wasn't gonna end well. He stood up slowly and walked over to Monoma. He should probably tell him, right? At least give him a chance to actually use his quirk in the fight.}

"What a good sport." Compress comments.

{"Hey, um, you might wanna copy one of your classmates' quirks before the fight." He said softly as soon as he was close enough, "I won't be mad or accuse you of cheating or anything."

Monoma glared at him, “What? You don’t think I’m good enough to control your *awesome* quirk? You think you’re better than me?”}

"Oof, that's a middle school flashback right there." Izuku grunts.

{Izuku’s jaw dropped, it was like he was talking to Katsuki.

“No, um, I’m trying to help you.”

Monoma chuckled, “I don’t need help to beat you. I’ll win fair and square.”}

"Just like Kachan." Midoriya shivers.

{Izuku sighed. He tried, but if Monoma really was like Katsuki, he probably wouldn’t listen to a word of what Izuku said, even if he straight-up told him he was quirkless. Izuku glanced over at Aizawa, who had actually woken up to watch Izuku’s fight, and he smiled slightly. Well, if Monoma was going to be stubborn about it, he may as well use his opponent’s ignorance to his advantage.}

"Haha, I'm in danger." Monoma chuckles nervously.

{“Your student just made a huge mistake.” Aizawa cracked his neck as he stood beside Vlad King and watched Deku talk to Monoma.

“What do you mean?” Vlad King asked.

“Well, your student can copy the quirk of anyone he touches, right?”

Vlad nodded.

“Well, I’m guessing he challenged Deku because he’s a recommendation student. He probably assumes he’s got a powerful quirk like Yaoyorozu and Todoroki.”

Vlad’s eyes widened, “But Deku’s quirkless.”}

"This is going to be so satisfying." Dabi grins.

{Aizawa nodded with a smile, “Your student’s about to learn an important lesson about making assumptions.

Vlad sighed as the two students prepared to square off, “Normally, it wouldn’t be a terrible assumption. You have to admit, Deku is an exception, not the rule.”

Aizawa grinned, “He’ll still win.”}

"Aww, you're so proud." Midnight teases.

"It's only logical." Eraserhead defends himself to the snickers of his friends.

{Vlad gave the signal and Monoma ran at Deku, just like he’d run at Tokoyami, but this time, there wasn’t a Dark Shadow to block him and Monoma slapped Deku on the arm.

“Ha! Even knowing how my quirk works, you still left yourself wide open...wait, what the…”

Deku smiled and swept Monoma’s legs out from underneath him before he could get his bearings, pinning him to the ground.}

"Get him!"
"Merked!"
"Get Good!"
"Justice!"
"Slaughtered!"

{“You’re *Quirkless?!*” Monoma screamed as Deku pressed his face into the dirt.

“I warned you that you might want to copy someone else’s quirk.” Deku said with a smile.}

"Cheeky little shit ain't ya." Shinsou chuckles.

"Hey, I earned that." Izuku retorts.

"Never said you didn't."

{“Deku wins.” Aizawa said, hiding his proud smile under his capture weapon. “Let Monoma up and choose your next opponent.”

“How did a weak quirkless kid even get into UA?” Monoma yelled.}

"Hello foot, didn't realize I'd be tasting you today."

{Aizawa was about to send him to the principal when Todoroki stepped in.

“Didn’t that quirkless kid just beat you?”}

"Oh, snap."
"Burn."
"Drag him!"

{All of 1A and some of 1B started snickering as Monoma’s face turned bright red.

“The fact that he’s quirkless only makes his accomplishments more impressive.” Yaoyorozu said. “He earned his place at UA, same as the rest of us.”}

"Thanks Yaomomo." Izuku turns to her.

"Anytime Midoriya." She replies with a smile.

{Aizawa noticed that Deku was starting to blush from the praise and figured he should probably save the kid from further embarrassment, “I don’t think I need to remind anyone here that bullying of fellow students will not be tolerated, nor will discrimination of any kind. You’re trying to be heroes, so attitudes like that will only hurt you in the future, not to mention the inexcusable damage you will do to others.” So he was still a little bitter about All Might, sue him. Shouta was just grateful that it was All Might’s day off so he didn’t have to see the guy or worry about keeping him away from Deku.}

"Good." Yagi states simply.

{Monoma glared at Deku as he sat down, and some of the other 1B students looked skeptical, but he figured they’d get over it when they saw what Deku was capable of.}

"Sorry about our other selves Midoriya."
"Yeah man, this isn't cool."
"What they said."

{“Alright problem child, stop wasting time and choose your opponent.”

Aizawa shook his head and retreated back into his sleeping bag as Deku soundly beat his second opponent and the class cheered.

That kid was gonna go far.}

"Damn right he will!"
"Deku, Deku, Deku!"
"Can't wait to see it!"

"Alright, alright, brats!" Tomura interrupts. "Settle down so we can move on." With a certain amount of grumbling they do, in fact, settle, much to his surprise. "Well... Okay then."

Now Playing

MM:SFH Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Izuku hangs out with some of his friends.

Alternate chapter title
Tangent: The Movie

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist for Hire

Home

{Izuku and Shouto were busy making katsudon in the kitchen of the apartment that acted as Mastermind's base while Toga and Twice chattered away on the couch and Dabi glared at them from the armchair.}

"This is so domestic." Ojiro comments.

{"And then, he had the audacity to look surprised when I stabbed him!" Toga smiled widely, showing off her fangs.

"That makes sense. *You're lying!*" Twice was wearing his mask inside, but no one really minded since it made him more comfortable. Izuku had a theory that breaking his arm might help Twice realize that he was real and not a clone, but that wasn't really something he was comfortable bringing up with Twice, even if they could tentatively be called friends.}

"Can we do that?" Twice begs *"I want to feel real."*

"No, you're not breaking your arm, we don't need you being hurt. And it's not like we can just go to a hospital." Shigaraki scolds.

"You *want* to break your arm?" Midoriya asks.

Twice shrugs. "If it proves I'm real then why not? *It's a stupid thing to do though.*"

"You don't think you're real?" Izuku questions further.

"I've got no proof otherwise." Twice laments. *"And I don't need any!"*

"Except if you were one of your clones, you would have dissolved when we got to the theater since it's a quirk dead zone." He points out.

There's a moment of silence before Twice turns to Headcase, who approached at some point during their conversation. "Is that true? *Am I real?*"

Headcase gives the man a soft smile. "Of course you are, you always were."

"Can I hug you?" Twice tears up. *"Please."*

The entity shakes her head. "I think not, Midoriya however might be inclined." She smirks gesturing to the boy who's been inching closer as the conversation went on. He turns to her wide-eyed for a moment before hesitantly moving away from his group to sit halfway to the villains. That's where Twice meets him melting into the little hero's arms.

Meanwhile...

"Should we be concerned Green Bean is chatting with the League." Midnight speaks her concern.

"Our host is hovering nearby so I doubt things will get out of hand." Nedzu points out.

"Still though... " Mic remarks.

"And now they're hugging." Aizawa huffs at the situation glancing at his boss and noticing the gleam in the creature's eye. "I don't like that look."

"Nonsense Shota-Kun, I've simply realized what our dear host has really brought us here for." Nedzu chirps with a sip of tea. "And I quite

look forward to seeing who if anyone else realizes."

{Toga nodded seriously, “Yep! It was such a cute expression, too! All wide-eyed and bloody! It was a shame it didn’t last longer!”}

"It always ends too soon." Toga shakes her head in disappointment.

{Dabi groaned and threw a pillow at them, “Ugh, just shut up already. Just because you decided to be best friends does *not* mean the rest of us want to be subjected to your crazy bullshit.”

“Be nice, Dabi.” Izuku wiped his hands on a towel as he walked in from the kitchen. “I for one, am very happy Himko has finally found someone to spend time with that's as crazy as she is.”}

"Yeah, leave us alone!" Twice scolds. *"Tear us a new one!"*

{“Aw, Mind-chan!” Himiko jumped up and threw her arms around him. “That’s the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me!”

Izuku laughed as Dabi rolled his eyes, “Go ahead and laugh Midoriya, it’s not like you have to live with them.”}

"Hey, I'm a delight!" Toga chirped.

{Shouto came up behind Izuku and raised an eyebrow at his brother, “I’m pretty sure you’re just jealous 'cause there’s no one as crazy as you.”}

"Oi!"
"Burn!"
Snort

{“That’s it!” Dabi jumped up and grabbed the seat cushion from his chair and ran at Shouto, whose eyes widened as he dodged Dabi and grabbed a pillow from the waiting Twice.}

"Get at him, Todoroki!"
"Kick his ass Dabi!"
"Grown-ass children I swear."

{“Ten out of ten! *Hit him harder, you’re so weak!*” Twice cheered. “Go Shouto! Go Dabi! *Be nice you two, stop fighting!*”}

"So childish."
"Wack him!"
"Aim for the face!"

{Himiko and Izuku were holding their sides laughing as Shouto and Dabi chased each other around the apartment. From what Shouto had said in their text conversations, Izuku had gathered that Endeavor hadn't ever really let either of them just play around and be kids, instead insisting they train constantly while isolating them from their other siblings and from kids their own age.}

"Kami, here start listing a bunch of games and stuff to show Todoroki when we get back." Ashido demands shoving her notebook at him.

"Yes Ma'am!" He salutes moving the notebook between him and Sero to jot down some ideas.

Meanwhile...

"A fucking pillow fight!" Mirko shrieks at Endeavor. "You wouldn't even let them have a *pillow fight!* How much of their childhood did you steal from them!?"

"They needed to focus on their training and didn't need the distractions." The man snaps defensively. Hawks can barely manage to grab Mirko's waist as she lunges for him.

Meanwhile...

"Hey Dabi, I think Mirko is about to fistfight Endeavor for your honor." Spinner points out.

Dabi turns toward the Hero section to see Hawks desperately trying to hold Mirko back while everyone else ignores the situation. "Damn, I'd pay to see that."

{_Once the rest of the league had discovered this fact, they had taken it upon themselves to introduce the two to everything they missed out on during their childhoods, resulting in them being the second and third most immature members of the league. First place still went to Shigaraki.}

Shigaraki grumbles quietly to himself "Just because it's true doesn't mean you should say it."

{Izuku ducked back into the kitchen to check on the food, "Alright you two, calm down and come set the table. Food's ready!"

Dabi reluctantly put his cushion back and Shouto looked like he was about to do the same, but at the last minute hit Dabi in the face while he was unarmed.}

"Oi!"
"Ha!"
"Swerved!"

{“Hey! You little…”

“Boys…” Izuku said warningly.}

"Oh no, Deku's using his mom voice." Uraraka giggles earning a squawk from the boy.

{_Shouto stuck his tongue out at Dabi before tossing the pillow down on the couch and walking to the kitchen. Himiko handed Dabi a stack of plates before turning to fix Shouto’s hair, which had gotten disheveled during the pillow fight. He’d cut it shortly after joining the league and it was now an undercut which he usually wore up in a pompadour style. The way he styled it made the red and white swirl together while still remaining mostly distinct.}

"It's not a bad look for him." Momo comments.

"Yeah, not gonna lie, it looks good." Jiro agrees.

{_ The first time Izuku had seen it was when he’d gone over to the league’s new hideout about three weeks after the move and he’d promptly had to leave until he’d gotten his blush under control. Himiko still hadn’t let him live it down.}

"Oh no." Midoriya groans knowing what's coming.

"Finally!" Ashido cheers. "Place your bets! Who asks who out? What's their first date? How long will they pine?"

"Considering this world their first date might include crime." Jiro chuckles.

"Nah, that seems like something you'd build up to." Hagakure counters.

"Girls we shouldn't be holding up the viewing." Momo scolds gently. "Besides, they'd clearly prefer something with less pressure. Like a

coffee date perhaps."

"Oui, they would be tres adorable." Aoyama agrees. "Now hush."

{Dinner at his mother's house was always a quiet affair, just the two of them, but dinner with his friends was loud. Between Toga's laughter, Dabi's sarcasm, Twice's personalities, and Shouto's conspiracy theories, it couldn't be called dinner so much as *controlled* chaos, but Izuku wouldn't have it any other way.}

"Not unlike any meal at the dorms." Iida comments.

{"I'm telling you," Shouto pointed his chopsticks at Dabi, "there is an extra-governmental group constantly watching our every move through Feel-Good Incorporated's satellites!"}

"Really Todoroki?" Izuku sighs fondly.

{Dabi sighed and took another bite, "Why in the world would a multi-billion dollar tech company sell out to a secret organization?"

"Maybe they were promised power." Shouto shrugged.

"But they already have power and they already have money." Izuku said. "What could this hypothetical secret organization possibly have to offer that would convince a respectable company to do something so illegal?"}

"I could think of a few motives." Eraserhead comments.

{"Respectable? As if!" Twice said. *"I've never heard of a better company!"*

"Oooh!" Toga pounded on the table as her face lit up, "What if it's not just Feel-Good Inc.? What if there are all sorts of big companies helping them and it's like the latest fashion trend for the rich? Those don't make any sense either and some of them *should* be illegal."}

Todoroki leaned closer to the screen with interest.

{Shouto looked at Toga, awestruck, while Dabi groaned, "Toga! Don't encourage him!"

"I like the way you think!" A small smile stole across Shouto's face and Izuku felt his heart skip a beat. He took another too-hot

bite. Maybe he'd be able to pass his blush off as the heat?}

"I take it you're staying here until those girls stop shipping you?" Twice asks the hero student who's still sitting next to him. *"Get away from me!"*

"Yes." Izuku deadpans.

{By the end of dinner, the theory had somehow grown to include a worldwide conspiracy and aliens that worshipped the ancient Egyptians. Toga, along with Izuku and both of Twice's personalities, thought it was hilarious and Dabi looked exhausted. He looked at Shouto incredulously as he finished wrapping up a convincing argument that Officer Sansa from the police department was actually an ancient cat god in disguise and thus the reason that the aliens had chosen Japan as their home base.}

Tsukauchi snorts "I've got to tell Sansa about this one."

{"How are we even related?"

Shouto smiled and shrugged, gathering up the dirty dishes and heading over to the sink. Toga volunteered to dry since she was finding Shouto's theories too entertaining to stop. The others put away the leftovers and went to go watch the news.

"Toga, can I ask you a question?" Shouto asked as he handed her a plate.

Toga hummed, "Does it have to do with if I'm an ancient cat god too?"

Shouto chuckled, a reaction that was becoming more natural the longer he was out from under his father's thumb,}

"It's a nice laugh, kero." Tsu compliments.

"Thank you." Todoroki says simply.

{_ "No, but we should come back to that another day. Umm…" He busied himself with scrubbing a pan, trying to work out exactly what he wanted to say. "Why have you been spending so much time with Twice?"

Toga thought for a minute, "I guess I didn't really think about it. We're best friends and I feel really comfortable around him, so

yeah. Well, that and," she shrugged, "like Mind-chan said, it takes a special kind of crazy to want to spend time with me. Twice and I have that in common, so it feels like we've gotten really close because of it." She shrugged again. "I don't know. Why? Have you got your eye on someone you want to *spend a lot of time with?"*}

"I knew they read as romance." Ashido whispers excitedly.

{Shouto took his left hand out of the water so he wouldn't accidentally boil it. "N-no! Why would you think that?"}

"Ship, ship, ship." Hagakure chants.

{Toga cackled, "Yeah, sure Shouto, you're just bringing up romance for no reason!" She winked at him. "If it's any consolation, I think he likes you too."}

"I know he does." Himiko chirps.

{"I don't have any idea what you're talking about." He denied it but knew it wasn't very convincing, considering the fact that his face was bright red.}

"There, there." Mei pats Todoroki's arm to comfort him.

{Toga laughed, "Sure you don't…"

"Himiko! We need to leave!" Twice came in and hugged her from behind. *"We have plenty of time, there's always tomorrow."*

Toga gasped in excitement, "Oh yeah, I saw this super cute boy earlier that I want to kill! Come on Jin, let's hurry!" She grabbed his hand and dragged him out the door, giving Izuku a quick hug on her way out.}

"And there's the murder date." Ojiro sighs.

{Shouto finished up the dishes, then joined Izuku and Dabi, who were sitting at the table, wiping his hands nervously on a rag as he sat down. Even though he and Dabi had spent weeks discussing this and Shouto was sure it was what he wanted to do, it was still nerve-wracking.}

Tomura perks up. "It's this *that* conversation?" No one bothers answering.

{Dabi looked at him and raised his eyebrows, asking for silent

confirmation. When Shouto nodded he turned to Izuku, “Midoriya, um, we actually wanted to talk business for a bit, if that would be ok?”

Izuku looked a bit surprised, but nodded, leaning forward in his seat, “What’s up?”

Shouto took a deep breath, no going back now, “How much would you charge us for a plan to kill Endeavor?”}

"Whatever the plan they will fail." Endeavor declares.

{Izuku hummed and nodded, “I was wondering when you two would ask. Will the rest of the league be participating as well, or will it just be the two of you?”}

"Fuck off, he's mine." Dabi growls.

{“Just the two of us, if possible.” Dabi said. “We already cleared it with Shigaraki, since it’ll probably be associated with the league whether or not the other members are there, but...this is personal, so we want to do it ourselves. I’m sure you can understand that.”}

"Overbitch." Izuku says under his breath earning a snort from his neighbor.

{Izuku nodded again, “Yeah, I get it, it was the same for me with Overhaul.” He turned to Shouto. “It’s a pretty big crime for your debut, Shouto. Are you sure you don’t want to start with something smaller?”}

"Go big or go home." Spinner encouraged.

{Shouto shook his head. He’d considered it, just starting off with robberies or something until he got used to being a villain, but, “I want my debut to have an impact. If the first thing I do as a villain is kill my father, then it sends a message, not only to him but to all of hero society that *he’s* the one who drove me to this. It wouldn’t have the same effect if I started off with any other crime.”}

Endeavor does not like the look on Nedzu's face.

{“I think a hero student turning villain would have an impact either way,” Izuku smiled, “but I agree that doing it this way will

be the most impactful." He pulled out a notebook and pencil. "I'm proud of you Shouto."}

The girls coo at the interaction between the two.

{Shouto smiled at the praise, "Thanks, Izuku. It means a lot."

"So," Dabi looked at Izuku, "how much is this plan going to cost us?"

Izuku looked at him like he'd grown a second head, "Oh, I wouldn't dream of charging you for this one."}

"Wonderful." Tsukauchi says sarcastically.

{"What?!" Shouto couldn't believe his ears. Surely Izuku wouldn't help kill the number one hero for free?

Izuku smiled, "You're my friend, Shouto, and you deserve payback for what that bastard did to you." He started scribbling down ideas.}

"Does he have to be so generous as a villain?" Mount lady scoffs.

{"No." Shouto said. "It's too much. At least let us pay you something!"

Izuku laughed and shook his head, "Nope! Just consider it an early birthday present or something."}

"That might be worse." Koda whispers.

{Shouto glared at him, "My birthday isn't for months."

Izuku shrugged, "Maybe it's for Dabi's birthday, then."

"His birthday is after mine."

"I don't care!" Izuku looked at him as Dabi lost control of his laughter. "Seriously, Shouto. It's the least I can do."}

Most of the villains are at least chuckling at this point and the rest of the room isn't doing much better.

{Shouto pouted but knew he wasn't going to be able to change Izuku's mind. Izuku smiled widely as he realized he'd won, "So, have you thought about a villain alias yet? You should probably

have that picked out before your debut."

Shouto shook his head, "Honestly, I hadn't really thought about it. I've just been going by Shouto."}

"Oh that just won't do." Mr. Compress says in disappointment.

{"No! That just won't do!" Izuku shook his head "You need a name that strikes fear into the hearts of your enemies. Think about what you'd want on your wanted poster!"

Shouto just looked at Izuku confused, "Why? Wouldn't any name strike fear into people's hearts if I do things people are afraid of?"}

"I'm so sorry Dabi, you're brother might be hopeless." Spinner says solemnly.

{Izuku groaned and hit his head against the table while Dabi laughed, "No, I've got the perfect name for you! Peppermint boy!"}

"Ew." The dual-element user scowled.

{Shouto scowled and Izuku raised his head up to reveal a terrifying glint in his eye, "No, what about Endeavwhore."}

"Someone needs to say that to Endeavor's face." Shinsou comments.

{Dabi grinned, "Daddy Issues!"

"Father Killer!"

"Ice Princess!"

"Don't I get any say in this?" Shouto grumbled.

"Nope!" Izuku and Dabi said in perfect unison and then Dabi gasped in delight, "I've got it! Icythot!"}

"I'm so using that one." Bakugo grins.

{Izuku had tried taking a drink of water, but ended up snorting it out his nose.

"You two are terrible." Shouto shook his head. "We should just leave now and prevent a disaster. Besides, Shigaraki doesn't want

us home too late.”}

"And now he's deflecting." Dabi rolls his eyes.

{Dabi didn’t stop laughing, but stood up and grabbed his coat, “See you later Midoriya! Don’t get into too much trouble!”

“Me? Trouble?” Izuku said innocently. “I would never!”}

"Bullshit!"
"Lies!"
"False!"

{Shouto shook his head, “Yeah, cause you’re just a paragon of perfection.”

Izuku gave him a bright smile that made his heart skip a beat, “Obviously! I’ll send you the completed plan within the next week or so and we can go over it and see if you want to make any changes. And keep thinking about a villain name!”}

"I'm gonna have to come up with a hero name aren't I?" Todoroki asks in resignation.

{“Alright, alright! I get it!” Shouto said. “See you later, Izuku.”

The door shut behind them and Shouto pulled up his hood to hide his distinctive hair. Beside him, Dabi had already pulled a medical mask over his scars.}

"Hiding distinctive features like that must be a hassle." Uraraka comments.

{“He must really like you, you know.” Dabi said as they started walking.

Shouto looked at him in confusion, “What? Who?”

Dabi rolled his eyes, “Midoriya. He never gives plans away for free. And he lets you call him by his first name. If that isn’t love, I don’t know what is.”}

"Like you'd know." Tomura scoffs, Earning a scowl from the temperamental fire user.

{Shouto sighed, “With our family, I don’t think either of us would know love if it bit us in the butt.”

Dabi shrugged, “Fair enough. But still, he must really care about you, even if it’s just as a friend.”

Shouto paused and looked up, back at Izuku’s apartment building, “I hope you’re right.”}

"Well kid you should probably get back to your friends." Twice waves izuku away. *"Don't leave me."*

Izuku chuckles as he stands. "Thanks for keeping me from the shippers."

"Anytime." *"Never again!"*

They both settle into their friend groups as the next chapter started.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:tGG Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Izuku goes out as a vigilante for the first time since he broke his arm.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Fight

{Shouta watched as some cops dragged away the mugger he'd just taken down, then used his capture weapon to pull himself up onto the rooftops to look for more problems. He wondered if Viridian would call him today before dismissing the thought. He didn't have to talk to the problem child every night. It's not like he was the kid's dad or anything.}

"Denial." Midnight teases.

{He was just about to jump onto the next rooftop when he felt something small and hard bounce off the back of his head. Immediately, he activated his quirk and whirled around, gripping his capture weapon in preparation to deal with whatever threat had managed to sneak up on him, only to see the damn problem child, smiling brightly and *waving at him with a goddamn broken arm!*}

"I agree with your incredulous reaction." Iida sighs.

{"Kid, is your arm broken?!" Ok, so that probably wasn't the best thing to say, considering that the cast was fairly obvious, but sue

him, it was the first time he'd seen the kid in over a month and he shows up with an obvious injury. Of course, Shouta had the right to be a little shocked. And what was the kid doing out with a broken arm?}

"Damn cabin fever, gets everyone into trouble at some point." Izuku laments.

{At least the kid had the decency to look embarrassed, "Well, um, not anymore, at least I don't think…" The kid tugged on his sleeve in a belated attempt to hide the cast from view. "It should be pretty much healed by now. But don't worry! I'm not actually planning on getting into any fights tonight, but, um, we need to go so that you can get into a fight!"}

"Of course he found a fight." Shigaraki groans.

"This kid really is a trouble magnet no matter the world." Spinner comments with a bit of concern in his voice.

{Shouta sighed heavily, "Lead the way, problem child."

The kid smiled and took off.

In his defense, Izuku hadn't been *looking* for a mugging. He'd been planning on finding Eraser first thing, but then he'd heard a scream and he couldn't just leave it alone! Oh well, he'd just have to talk to Eraser about the bee after the fight. Thankfully, because he'd been looking for him in the first place, the mugging wasn't that far from where he'd found Eraserhead, so it didn't take long at all for them to reach it.}

"Yes, lucky that." Aizawa comments dryly.

{He was about to jump down onto the street out of habit when Eraser glared at him, *"Stay put, problem child."*

Izuku laughed sheepishly, "I, um, wasn't going to join the fight?"}

"Sure." Shinsou drawls sarcastically.

{Eraser simply looked at him with a tired skepticism, and Izuku could almost *feel* him rolling his eyes behind his goggles, but he just sighed and jumped down to take care of the villain. Izuku got out his notebook and started scribbling down the different techniques that he used, most of which Izuku was familiar with

from watching previous fights. There was only one guy, and he was obviously a little drunk, so it didn't take long at all for Eraser to take him down and restrain him.}

"That was anticlimactic." Hagakure comments.

"Was it though?" Ojiro questions doubtfully.

{Wait, now that the villain was restrained, the cops would probably be coming soon to take him in, and Izuku probably shouldn't still be there when they came, seeing as how he was a vigilante and all. Izuku put his notebook back in his pocket and stood to leave, only to be wrapped in Eraser's capture weapon before he could jump to the next roof.}

"Shouldn't he be arresting this kid?" Spinner asks.

"Technically, but he won't." Dabi shrugs.

"Why might that be?" Compress wonders.

"We have no idea." Toga chirps. "We think it's the dad vibes Eraserhead pretends he doesn't have."

"Well alright then." Spinner just accepts the answer and moves on.

{He looked up at Eraser, who was glaring at him with his quirk activated, "Go home, problem child."}

"Please do."
"Listen."
"Just go to bed."

{Izuku couldn't help pouting like a petulant child, "I've hardly left my house in five weeks, Eraser! I"m going stir crazy!"

"Running around with a broken arm is irrational." Eraser countered.

"I've only been outside like three times in the last month!" Izuku pleaded. Now that he was actually out and running around, he didn't want to go back home. "And one of those was to go to the grocery store, so it doesn't even count! Please, just let me have this!"}

"Go to a park then." Shinsou snarks.

"And get bullied and/or harassed?" Izuku points out.

"Oh yeah." Shinsou huffs.

{Eraser simply tightened his capture weapon slightly, “Do I need to escort you home?”

“I’m a vigilante, remember?” Izuku pointed out. “I’ve got a secret identity to protect.”

Where was all this confidence coming from? Since when did he get so comfortable with Eraserhead to...was this sass? Or were they just arguing? Either way, Izuku wasn’t used to acting this way with anyone, much less with an adult. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that Eraser had *missed* him when he disappeared or the fact that he actually seemed to care about what happened to him, even if that care manifested in a protectiveness for his broken arm.}

"Ah he's getting comfortable with you." All Might grins addressing Aizawa with fondness in his voice.

"He sasses you?" Aizawa replies skeptically.

"On occasion." Yagi chuckles.

{But, oddly enough, Eraser didn’t seem to mind it. He wasn’t getting mad at Izuku for back talking him like his teachers would. He wasn’t blowing up like Kacchan would. He was just...taking it in stride like this was how Izuku was *supposed* to act toward him. It was weird.}

"Oh no, honey, you're a teenager, you're supposed to talk back occasionally. It's how you grow." Amplifier comforts.

{Eraser was still holding him tightly and Izuku knew he probably wouldn’t let go until he promised to head straight home. Well, Izuku could probably use the sleep, considering that he’d been up all night researching the...Oh! Izuku had forgotten that he still needed to tell Eraser what he’d learned about the bee! And he had so many questions about that rash of instant villains in Naruhata. If he was correct, Eraser had been involved with those ones too.}

"Yes but I shouldn't talk about it." Aizawa remarks tiredly.

{“Fine.” He said finally. “I’ll go home and rest, but only if you

answer some of my questions."

Shouta rolled his eyes, but nodded and unwrapped his capture weapon. This kid was gonna be the death of him. Going out and looking for fights with a broken arm? He had zero sense of self-preservation, which Shouta probably should have expected, considering that the kid was likely suicidal, but it was one thing to theorize about it and another entirely to see it in action. The only comforting thing about this whole situation was that looking at the timeline of Viridian's disappearance, he probably went off the grid because of his arm, not his depression. And he was acting more confident than usual, so maybe the break had been good for him.}

"Leaving that shitty school, doing well on his online classes..." Monoma comments snidely. "Yeah, the break did him some good."

{Viridian's eyes lit up, "I want to know more about the instant villains!"

Shouta's eyes widened, "Where did you learn that term? Did I mention it?"}

"Sho, are you panicking?" Mic asks.

"Little bit, yeah." Aizawa groans.

{Viridian shook his head, "No, I was just looking up stuff because there have been a couple times that groups of people have gotten dosed with trigger, but I never actually saw them shoot up. I ended up going to the place where that group last night got dosed, and I found this!"

The kid dug in his hoodie pocket for a moment before pulling out a zip-lock bag and handing it over. Shouta looked at him in confusion, then looked at the bag and his blood ran cold. A tiny mechanical bee. He'd considered the possibility that Queen Bee could be involved in this, but he'd hoped that they'd succeeded in destroying all the bees after that whole fiasco with Pop Step, but apparently not.}

"Don't talk about it Eraserhead." Tsukauchi begs.

{"It belongs to a villain named Queen Bee, who was heavily involved with the instant villain incidents a few years ago in Naruhata," Viridian frowned, "well, I don't actually have to tell

you that, considering that I'm pretty sure you were on the case back then. Wait, were you on the case back then? I'm so sorry for assuming and…"

Ah, Viridian's insecurities were back. Shouta cut him off before the kid could work himself into a panic, "Yeah, I was part of that investigation. In fact, I still am, that's why I'm one of the heroes tracking trigger."}

"A suicidal kid's insecurities, no better way to get information from a hero." Hawks jokes.

{Viridian sighed in relief, "Okay. Good. So anyway, once I found the bee, then it was pretty easy to trace it back to Naruhata. Were the victims back then random, or were they picked for any specific reason?"

"They were random." Shouta responded. "Well, some of them annoyed the host or bought the drugs to get high, but most of them were just in the wrong place at the wrong time."}

"And that's terrifying." Sato remarks.

{"That's what I thought." Viridian pinched his lower lip in thought. "And of those instant villains, a few disappeared after the incident, only to return as the modified next-level villains, right?"

Shouta nodded.}

"It would appear you are talking about it, Aizawa-Kun." Nedzu comments.

"I can see that." Aizawa deadpans.

{Viridian sighed, "That's what I was worried about. The bees have orders to target any random citizen as long as they're loaded with the drug…"

"Wait, what?" The kid had managed to lose him. "How do you know what their orders are?"

The kid looked surprised, "Oh, I hacked it."}

"He says as though that's not a weird thing to be able to do." Rock Lock mentions.

{Shouta had to have heard that wrong, “You... *hacked* the bee? It’s quirk created, how did you hack into it?”

Viridian shrugged, “Well, I knew that it had to have some way of communicating with the queen when it was alive, and since it seems to have the characteristics of a robot, I assumed that it was communicating wirelessly. Honestly, it was just a lucky guess.”}

"More like a brilliant deduction." Nedzu corrects.

{Shouta grinned. Knowing the bees could be hacked could be a game changer, “What did you find, kid?”

“Well most of the files were corrupted when the bee was destroyed.” Viridian frowned. “Or maybe it has more to do with being cut off from the hive? Well, anyway, I was able to view its directive file, which basically ordered it to target anyone. I’m just concerned because the last time this happened, well, you know, I don’t have to tell you because you were there and…”

The kid was mumbling again, “Problem child?”

Viridian flinched, then took a deep breath, “The last time there was an outbreak of instant villains like this, whoever was behind it seemed to be looking for candidates for next-level villains. But the thing is, it’s been months since this started in Musutafu and we should have seen at least one next-level villain by now if they follow their old pattern. But what if next-level villains aren’t their ultimate goal and they’re moving on to the next phase of their experiments?”}

"And *that's* a terrifying thought." Aizawa stresses.

{Shouta swallowed, “Then there’s a possibility that these victims are in danger. And when they came back…”

“They’ll be permanently modified and even more dangerous.” Viridian followed. “I have a theory that they’re most likely trying to permanently strengthen a person’s quirk, but it’s just a theory. I know that it’s probably not feasible to put every instant villain under police protection, but if we just knew the *kinds* of quirks they were looking for, then…”}

"He's getting too close." Aizawa comments clearly worried.

{The kid was digging too deep. Shouta didn’t know who exactly

was behind the villain factory, he was still really skeptical of the whole All for One myth, but he knew they were powerful enough to kidnap a witness out of a police interrogation room. Viridian was a teenager. A smart teenager, a teenager with a death wish and zero sense of self-preservation, but a teenager nonetheless. However valuable the kid's investigation was, his involvement was going to catch the attention of all the wrong people and put him in danger. He had to put a stop to this.}

"And won't Sensei be surprised when he meets him." Shigaraki remarks.

{"Kid." He cut off Viridian's ramblings. "I need you to stop looking into this, ok?"

Viridian looked at him in confusion, "Why?"

"You're meddling in things you have no way to understand." Shouta said. "If you don't drop this, you're only going to put yourself in danger."}

"He doesn't care about that." Izuku murmurs.

{"But if I can protect people…"

"NO!" Viridian flinched at his yell. Shouta cursed softly, he shouldn't have done that. The kid obviously had some trauma, and his yelling wasn't going to help the kid trust him at all. He forced himself to take a deep breath. "Viridian, you're a kid. You should be worrying about going to the mall with friends, not about drug rings and kidnappings."}

"See, that would require friends." Izuku comments, much to the dismay of his current friend group.

{Viridian was silent for a long moment, "I never had any friends to worry about…"

Before Shouta could apologize or ask what he meant by that, the kid ran and jumped onto the next roof, then disappeared into the shadows.

Shouta could only hope that he actually went home like he'd promised.}

"Well *that* could have gone better." Mic remarks.

"This is why I say I'm not good with kids." Aizawa sighs.

"You do better than you think, Sho." Midnight comforts.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

The students deal with the aftermath of the USJ.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Strength

{On the one hand, Izuku probably shouldn't have snuck out of the house at dawn to get to UA early and work on the analysis packets for the hero course. On the other, Mei was already in the lab when he arrived, so it couldn't be too bad.}

“Great minds think alike.” Izuku comments as Mei grins.

“But fools rarely differ.” Shinsou sasses earning himself an elbow to the ribs.

{“Making up for lost time?” Izuku laughed when he saw her. “If you missed inventing so much you should have taken me up on my offer yesterday.”}

“Let’s not.” Iida groans.

{“Oh shut up Izu-Kun!” Mei swatted at him, but Izuku simply grinned and sidestepped as she grumbled, “It’s not like breaking in when security was down for improvements would even be a challenge anyway…”}

“Hopefully not the only reason.” Majima grumbles.

{Izuku raised an eyebrow, “Are you saying you want to break in

another day? Maybe test their new defenses."}

"No." Iida groans.

{Mei's eyes widened, "Do you think Nedzu would give us permission?! I could make so many babies for it and you could practice your hacking and can you ask him..?!"}

Nedzu merely chuckles much to Powerloader's dismay.

{"Maybe after the sports festival." Izuku laughed. "But don't you still have to fine-tune your support items for that? And we both still have to help Shinso get ready."}

"Yes, let's not forget about me." Shinsou drawls.

{"Is that why you're here so early?" Mei asked. "Preparing for the sports festival?"

"Uh…no." Izuku rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "I, uh, I couldn't sleep."

Mei looked at him with pity and a level of understanding that made Izuku feel slightly guilty, "Me either. Nightmares?"}

"Yep."
"Mood."
"Can relate."
"It happens."
"Totally normal."

{Izuku sighed and nodded, "I just...if I had...well, I wanted to come in and maybe get an abbreviated packet done for each student. If they'd had them a few days ago…"

"They still wouldn't have had time to implement your suggestions." Mei interrupted. "You know that, right?"}

"Logically yes emotionally no." Izuku remarks.

{"I *know!* But…" Izuku groaned in frustration. "But I just can't help but wonder…"

"If maybe their support items were better, then maybe they wouldn't have had to go through that." Mei finished. }

"Oh, Mei." Ochaco puts her hand on the girl's shoulder.

{It threw Izuku for a loop, but for the first time since he'd arrived, he actually *looked* at the invention she was currently working on. It was something like a taser but didn't have a power source, meaning that it was most likely designed for someone with an electricity quirk, one that the user couldn't consciously direct or control. Izuku saw a stack of blueprints under that one, and he guessed that if he looked through them, he'd see one for most members of 1-A and maybe some of 1-B as well, "You couldn't sleep either."}

"That.." Kaminari says weakly not sure what to say

{"I just need to make sure they have the best babies they can get." Mei said it like that was all there was to it, but even though he really hadn't known her long, Izuku could still tell she was using pragmatism to hide the tangled mess of emotions underneath. "Isn't that what a support engineer does? Gives a hero…"

"Their best chance." They said together, then ended up laughing.}

"Perhaps UA would be better off connecting support and hero courses earlier on." Yaomomo considers.

{"We're a mess, aren't we?" Mei asked.

"Yeah, a little." Izuku said. "But hey, where's the fun in life without a little chaos? I'll be in my workroom if you need me. I still, uh, I still have that blanket, if you need it."}

"Ooooh." Mina teases as Midoriya buries his face in his hands.

{Izuku felt slightly hot and figured it was from the lack of good sleep. Mei nodded and turned back to her newest baby, "It probably won't do much good, but thanks."}

"The thought counts, kero."

{Izuku nodded and left toward his room when Mei spoke again.

"Thank you." She said softly. "I don't know what I'd do without you, Izu-Kun."

Izuku smiled softly, "Me neither."

He left his door cracked open and they spent the time before their

classmates arrived in companionable silence, working on their own projects.}

“Sometimes you just need a bit of quiet.” Ojirou comments.

{Shouto sat in the back row, half listening to his classmates talk about the USJ attack while mostly lost in his own thoughts. When the villains had shown up, he had mostly just been...annoyed? Was that the right word? But it was expected, wasn’t it? Villains attacked heroes. It was what they did. It made sense. What didn’t make sense was the mysterious third party that had seemed intent on helping them.}

“Someone taking over the rescue facility is certainly unexpected.” Tokoyami comments.

{Shouto wasn’t the only one curious either if his classmates' before-class conversations were any indication.}

“Figures 1-A would be so easily distracted.” Monoma comments quieter than usual.

{“It was kinda freaky, honestly.” Ojirio told Hagakure, who seemed to be hanging on his every word. “It was like the building came alive all of a sudden and the fire was on my side. Every time I started going in the wrong direction, it would block my path and it would catch any villains trying to sneak up on me before they even had a chance. It was creepy...but in a cool way, if that makes sense.”}

“It does.” Hagakure chirps.

{“Cheat Code is a force of darkness.” Tokoyami said seriously. “I cannot describe my experience in any other words than that it was as if a benevolent supernatural entity was haunting the rain itself and bending it to their will.”}

“Thank you?” Izuku comments.

{“Shut up about that fucking coward!” Bakugo exploded and glared at everyone. “If this Cheat Code fucker really wanted to help, he should have shown up in person rather than hiding behind a microphone like a scared little sheep! And he should have let us destroy the damn villains!”}

“Attitudes like that get people killed.” Aizawa growls.

“Good thing you’re teaching them that right Sho?” Mic comforts.

{“Come on, Bakubro! You gotta admit it was kinda manly how he protected us like that.” Kirishima hit his fists together with a grin. “I wanna meet him!”}

Izuku smiles to himself once again considering learning to hack as it seems like a useful skill.

{And that was the other weird thing, wasn’t it? Everyone else who had ended up caught in the zones had said that the building kept fighting them until the very end unless they headed toward the entrance, but Cheat Code had allowed Shouto to get close enough to save Aizawa. Why him? Why not Kirishima, who was arguably kinder and more likely to listen? Was it just because Shouto had a more powerful quirk? But Bakugo was powerful enough to fight as well, so if it was just about power, he should have been allowed to reach the plaza as well. If it was about effective rescuing, wouldn’t Uraraka have been a better fit? She wanted to be a rescue hero and she could have floated Aizawa out of there.}

“If I could get to him.” Ururaka points out.

Todoroki nods in agreement “That is a good point.

{So what made Shouto different? Why choose him out of all of his classmates.

Apparently, that was a question for another day because Aizawa chose that moment to walk in. One of his arms was in a thick cast and there was a large piece of gauze taped beneath his eye, but overall, he seemed a lot less injured than Todoroki had expected. He flinched as the class erupted into loud cheers.}

“He’s not a mummy!” many of class A cheer.

{“Aizawa-sensei! You’re alright!” Ashido exclaimed loudly. “We were so worried when we saw Todoroki leading you out…”

“I’m fine.” Aizawa interrupted. “It would have been a lot worse if the villains’ full attention had been on me or if Shigaraki had managed to hit me with his quirk, but as it was, the old lady was able to heal most of it.”}

Aizawa gets a cane to the knee as Recovery Girl scoffs out a “rude.”

{“Is Thirteen-Sensei…?” Uraraka asked, worried.

“They’re still in recovery.” Aizawa said. “Let that be a lesson to you to always be aware of your surroundings. Quirks are dangerous, even and especially your own. Always expect someone to use every weakness against you. You got lucky this time. The thugs the league of villains sent were low-level, and Cheat Code protected most of you from the inner circle, but when you get out onto the streets, you’re going to meet villains who are prepared to do whatever it takes to kill you. If you’re not prepared for that, leave now.”}

“I guess they don’t treat heroics as...” Spinner starts.

“Flippantly?” Compress suggests.

“Yeah, they don’t treat it as *flippantly* as we thought.”

{Nobody left, not that Shouto was surprised. It probably hadn’t really hit them yet, he supposed. Shouto didn’t leave either. His father could have killed him hundreds of times over if he wasn’t so worried about losing his *masterpiece,* so Shouto was used to the threat of death. Not to mention that the threat of death would become that much more real if he were to refuse to be a hero.}

“That...”
“I...”
“Um...”
“Concerned.”

{“Speaking of Cheat Code,” Tsu asked tentatively, “who is he?”

Aizawa sighed and muttered something that sounded like *problem child* before addressing the class, “He’s an analyst.”}

“How descriptive.” Midnight remarks sarcastically.

Aizawa raises an eyebrow at her. “Would you out the identity of Nedzu’s personal student to your class?”

“Fair.” she concedes.

{Kaminari and Ashido tried to interrupt, probably to whine and beg for more info, but Aizawa silenced them with a glare and

Todoroki couldn't help but notice that he didn't activate his quirk like he normally would have so he must not be completely healed yet, "He is an analyst and *that is all the information you will be getting.* The UA staff has decided to keep his identity under wraps to protect him for now since I think you each can understand why we wouldn't want villains getting their hands on him, so, no, I will not be telling you who he is. Maybe he'll tell you himself eventually, but until then, you'll just have to deal with your curiosity. However," Aizawa used his good arm to pull a stack of papers from his capture weapon, "he did stupidly decide to be overactive and give you these. Come up when I call your name."}

"How are those pages not wrinkled?" Toga asks.

"It doesn't..." Tomura start. "Actually I'm kinda curious about that."

"Who's brave enough to ask?" Dabi challenges.

"No." Compress cuts off any response.

{The room instantly dissolved into whispers as Aizawa called up Aoyama and handed him a few papers. He read through them and swore softly in french as the other members of the class were called. When Shouto's name was called, he received a packet with two papers stapled together. The first section gave a brief description of his quirk, while the other sections gave bulleted lists of strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. At the end was an imprinted sticker with some kind of logo and Cheat Code's name.}

"Damn Mei, you work fast." Shinsou remarks.

"Of course I do." She cheers.

{"These are abbreviated analyses of your quirks and fighting styles." Aizawa explained once all the packets had been handed out. "You'll apparently be receiving full versions near the end of the semester, once Cheat Code has had more of a chance to see you in action. He went to Nedzu early this morning, however, and insisted we give you these. Use them wisely. Analysts can be a hero's greatest ally or greatest enemy, depending on how you treat them."}

"Case and point: Mastermind." Tokage comments.

{"Whoa dude!" Sero yelled. "These are awesome! There's more

where this came from? That's super cool!"

"More like super freaky." Mineta complained. "How does this guy even know so much about us?"}

"Shut up Mineta!"

{The class looked toward Aizawa for an answer, only to find that he had already cocooned himself inside his sleeping bag and was slumped against the wall asleep, so he'd be absolutely zero help. Shouto looked more closely at his packet and frowned as he read.

Strengths:

- *Ice Power*
- Ice control
- Strategic thinking (?)

Weaknesses:

- *Left side is left open to attack*
- Danger of hypothermia

Suggestions:

- *Use fire half of quirk.*}

"He's not going to like that." Todoroki states.

{The analyst only had part of the picture, but that didn't make Shouto feel any less annoyed at yet *another* person telling him to use his fire. He didn't have to listen to someone...Shouto froze. Hadn't he decided to trust Cheat Code in part because Endeavor wouldn't have? Ignoring his advice completely would be exactly what Endeavor would do, but he still couldn't use his fire…}

"Do something he'll hate." Dabi suggests off-handedly.

{There was a loud explosion and Shouto looked up to see Bakugo throwing the remains of his smoking packet out the window, "I don't fucking need this loser to tell me what I already fucking know! I don't have *impulsivity issues!*"}

"Pfft!"
"Are you sure about that?"
"Is he serious?"

{Aizawa crawled out of his bag, grabbed another packet from his capture weapon, and slammed it down on Bakugo's desk, "He mentioned you might do that. Be careful with that one. If you explode it, you won't be getting a third."}

"Just take the packet." Bakugo growls.

{Bakugo reached for the papers, sparks already leaping across his palms, but Aizawa snatched the packet out of his reach, "What the fuck, old man?"

"Bakugo." Aizawa said sternly. "If you don't want to be a better hero or a hero at all…"}

"I don't usually approve of your expulsion threats." Mic sighs.

{Bakugo huffed, but grabbed the papers without setting them on fire and slumped down in his seat, staring at the packet like it had personally offended him. Shouto could relate.}

Snort
"Really?"
"Ha!"

{"If only we could actually meet this analyst in person!" Iida lamented loudly. "I have a great many questions on how to improve my quirk's functions and…"

"Suit yourself." Jiro shivered. "It was freaky enough knowing that he could make the ground collapse beneath us at any moment. My money's on him being even scarier in person."}

"Hey!" Izuku exclaims.

"Sorry, Midoriya." Jiro apologizes.

{"What a mad banquet of darkness." Tokoyami muttered.}

"What he said." Dark Shadow teases.

{It had already been a long day by the time Hitoshi reached the gym after school and started stretching, considering that Midoriya was probably still trying to pull Hatsume away from whatever invention she was currently working on. Hanging out with the two yesterday had been fun, but his foster parents had yelled at him when he'd gotten home, accusing him of going out and trying

to join a gang despite the fact that he'd *tried* telling them he was going out with friends before he left. Too bad they wouldn't actually let him *talk* to them. Or at all.}

"All I need are names." Mei remarks cheerfully.

{And then all everyone was talking about was the hero course. Those lucky students with the perfect quirks and everything laid out for them without having to fight tooth and nail and convince everyone that he deserved every chance that they did. Even his kidnappers had spent the day focused on them, which was annoying, even though he really didn't have any right to be angry, considering that those two had been involved with the attack. At least they didn't think he was a villain.

Yet.}

"You're not a goddamn villain." Izuku hisses.

{A slight sound behind him had Hitoshi jumping to his feet and whirling around to see an injured hobo nodding at him approvingly, "Good situational awareness. So you're Cheat Code's extra credit project."}

"Apparently." Shinsou drawls.

{Oh no. Hitoshi froze as he realized that this wasn't just any injured hobo. He was talking to *Eraserhead! Eraserhead knew who he was!?!*}

"Good to know I'm not the only fanboy now." Izuku teases.

{Hitoshi forced himself to snap out of his...well, his hero worship, for lack of a better word, "Uh, yes, sir!"

Eraserhead looked at him appraisingly, "You're doing physical training?"

"Yes sir!" Hitoshi nodded quickly. "I'm mostly focusing on speed and flexibility for now, since I don't have time to gain a lot of strength before the sports festival, but…"}

"There'll be time for that later." Aizawa comments.

{"But there'll be time for that later if you get into the hero course." Eraserhead finished. "Don't underestimate stealth, either.

You'd be surprised how often it can come in handy."

Hitoshi's eyes went wide. Was Eraserhead really giving him advice? He didn't know what to say. What was someone supposed to say when their favorite hero gave them tips?}

"Probably start with "thank you". Todoroki deadpans.

{After a too-long moment where Shinso was freaking out, Midoirya burst through the door, his jacket covered in some sort of oil that must have exploded from Hatsume's most recent experiment, "Shinso! Sorry I'm late, Mei-chan...Oh, Eraserhead! I, uh, I didn't know you'd…"}

"Breathe Problem Child." Aizawa rolls his eyes.

{Eraserhead interrupted Midoriya's rambling by bowing and Midoirya instantly turned bright red and started sputtering, "What…? Eraserhead, sir, I...uh, I don't...what?"

"You helped save my students." Eraserhead straightened. "Thanking you is only logical."}

"What's with this guy and logic?" Spinner asks.

"It's one of his few personality traits." Dabi snarks.

{"I, uh…" Midoriya looked to Hitoshi helplessly, but he was still reeling from *Eraserhead giving him advice!* Midoriya turned back to Eraserhead and bowed back, "I apologize for not doing more."}

"You didn't have to do more." Midnight coos.

{Eraserhead snorted, "I knew you'd be a problem child. I don't know what else I expected." He turned to leave, but stopped at the door and fixed Hitoshi with a look, "You have potential. Don't waste it. It's not going to be easy to claim the extra seat in my class."}

"Challenge accepted." Shinsou preens.

{That challenge was apparently what it took to snap Hitoshi out of his trance and he couldn't help smirking slightly, "It won't be easy to be a hero either, but that doesn't mean I'm not going to do it."}

"Right answer!" Joke cheers.

{Eraserhead gave a creepily wide grin and left, allowing the door to swing closed behind him. When he was sure he was gone, Hitoshi deflated, “Midoirya, I think I just met somebody even scarier than you are.”}

“Not hard to do.” Izuku snarks.

{He ignored Midoriya’s sputtering denials as he went back to stretching. He had a sports festival to win, after all.}

“Where were we in Shadows?” Himiko asks.

“The exercise is starting.” Dabi reminds “or at least it should be.”

“Finally some action.” Shigaraki grouses.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

The mad rush begins!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movie Heroes

Rush

{Mom smiled as the clock struck noon, the exact time that the heroes were set to arrive in the fake city, “Ok, Sparky. It’s go time!”

They jumped off the roof and Denki looked over to see the rival group of villains they’d seen earlier doing the same thing. Mom grinned, “I’ll take care of these guys, you go in and hold up the cashier.”}

“Yeah, ‘cause that’s the easy job.” Kaminari whines sarcastically.

{Denki gulped, “What?”

“Just use your electricity and threaten them a little bit.” Mom shrugged, her own hand coated in electricity. “It’s just like the movies, I believe in you.”}

“She’s so supportive of your life of crime.” Ashido giggles.

{Denki exhaled slowly, “O-ok then. Good luck?”

Mom smiled, “You too sparky. Knock ‘em dead.”}

“But not literally!” Jiro jeers.

“Hey!”

{Denki gave a jerky nod of affirmation and ran through the glass doors of the bank, his entire body sparking, “This is a robbery! Give me all your money!”

He winced at how stupid he sounded, but the teller leaped into action and started shoveling the money from the register into a little bag. They probably knew they’d get robbed in the first few minutes. Once the money was in the bag, the teller tied the bag shut with a ribbon and Denki noticed a little badge hanging off it. It was around the size of his hand and emblazoned with a large *#8*. That must be how they identified the objectives!}

“Designing those tags will be a bit of fun.” Nedzu comments.

{The teller shoved the bag onto the counter, “Just take it! Don’t hurt us!

“Did you get the money Sparky?” Mom came bounding through the door and her eyes zeroed in on the bag of cash. “Good work!”

“Uh…yeah!” Denki nodded and gave her a thumbs-up as she grabbed the cash. “Easy as pie.”}

“Sure.” Bakugo snorts.

{“Good.” She looked out the window as there was a giant crash down the street. “Now for the hard part. The heroes are here.”}

“Skatter!”
“Run!”
“Fucking book it!”

{Kyoka largely ignored the heroes as she made her way around the city, her villain token firmly hidden in her pocket. She still couldn’t figure out what had happened back at that cafe. How had she even done that? She’d never been able to control others using her heartbeat before, so it must be a new development because of One for All. She’d thought that it was supposed to make her punch stronger, but apparently, it had manifested in a different way than it had in All Might. She took a deep breath and ducked into an alley as a group of heroes ran past her. She wasn’t too worried about the actual objectives at the moment. She had her own objectives to complete, namely, figuring out this new

ability before she actually had to fight anyone with it.}

“Smart girl.” Gran comments.

{She should get some portable speakers, but she’d have to find a place that didn’t ask for her token…or she’d have to steal them. Kyoka huffed. Of course, she’d have to steal them. Speakers, however, weren’t always very subtle. If she was projecting her heartbeat, there was a chance the heroes would be able to block her influence with earplugs. If she could figure out a way to do it quietly, then she might be able to get what she needed without actually fighting for it.}

“But how can she pull that off?” Midoriya mumbles.

{She waited until the heroes were out of sight before stepping out of the shadows and walking up to the nearest civilian, an older woman who seemed nice, but also seemed like someone Kyoka could overpower in the case of an emergency. Unless she took after Recovery Girl, in which case, it’d been a good run. She jogged up to the woman and focused on calming her own heartbeat, “Hello! How are you!”}

“Good to know I can still strike fear into these young ones’ hearts.” Chiyo remarks.

{“Oh, I’m fine, sweetie, how are you?" The woman smiled, but she didn’t have that blank quality the people in the cafe had had, so Kyoka assumed she was just choosing to be nice, not being forced into calmness by her quirk. She’d have to try something else.}

“Never thought I’d be so interested in quirk experimentation.” Spinner comments to himself.

{“Um, I’m fine.” Kyoka slowly snaked one of her earphones over and jabbed it into the woman’s arm, immediately focusing on projecting a calming heartbeat. “I need your help with something.”}

“Just stab a bitch why don’t ya?” Kaminari teases.

“Your lucky you’re out of range at the moment.” Jiro snacks back.

{The woman struggled for a moment, but calmed down almost immediately, her eyes taking on the blank quality that meant her

emotions were now under Kyoka's control, "Of course, sweetie, what can I help you with?"}

"Nice to not be the only one with mind control for once." Shinsou comments.

{Kyoka swallowed thickly and looked around, "Actually, that'll be everything, thanks."

She unplugged and ran. The woman sat there dazed for a few seconds before letting out a blood-curdling scream, "Villain! It's a villain! Where are the heroes!"}

"Shit!"
"Crap!"
"Run!"

{"Oh crap." Kyoka rushed down an alley and focused on stealth and keeping to the shadows as she hurried away. "Ok, so that worked...ish, now to find an electronics shop."}

"This is going to be a disaster." Jiro groans. Momo lays her hand on the punk girl's shoulder to offer some comfort.

{Nejire was feeling a lot of emotions right now, but most of all, she was excited. Sure, Tamaki might be nervous about fighting the fake villains and Mirio was concerned about stopping as many villains as possible, but Nejire was mostly thinking about how exciting this all was! They fought villains during their work studies, of course, but never all together as a class, so all she could think was how much fun this was gonna be!}

"Hado!" Aizawa says in a scolding tone.

"I promise I'm taking things seriously Sensei!" Nejire defends herself.

{Their class was an interesting mix. Aizawa had expelled a lot of them during their first year or at least demoted them to general studies, so they'd ended up with some transfer students from other schools or from different departments. As long as they had the determination to be true heroes, Aizawa could work with them, but if they didn't, well...Nejire was just happy that she and her friends had made the cut!}

"How has Mineta made the cut?" most of the girls think to themselves.

{Their class president had taken charge and sent half of them to protect an objective right from the start, while the other half had gone to the fake hero agency to get everything set up. Nejire and her boys had gotten sent to a museum and she and Amajiki had both been hoping that they'd have some time to browse through the exhibits first, but no luck. As soon as they'd arrived, the alarms had started going off and Mirio had had to phase through the wall in order to stop two villains who were trying to steal a vase.}

"Which you should have expected." Amijiki whispers.

{Nejire and Tamaki had caught up to him quickly, of course, but by that time, Mirio had already managed to corner the two against a wall. They took their places on either side of him and got into battle stances. }

"Oh, these two idiots." Aizawa sighs with dread lining his posture.

{The two men, who were similar enough that they could be brothers, looked at each other and one of them grimaced, "We're gonna have to run, aren't we Ichiro?"

"Yeah, Jiro, we are." Ichiro sighed. "We're not allowed to use Trigger in this exercise, so there's no way we'll be able to lift this huge thing after we activate our quirks."}

"Sure just casually mention trigger in the middle of a school exercise. That makes perfect sense." Aizawa groans.

{"What are you talking about?" Mirio smiled. "Aren't you here to give us a fight?"

Ichiro laughed, "No way! We're just here to annoy Eraser and make sure he doesn't forget about us!"}

"If only." Aizawa pointedly ignores the snickering going on around him.

{"Yeah." Jiro laughed. "Here! Catch!"

Tamaki barely managed to transform one arm into a tentacle and catch the vase before it shattered. When Nejrie looked back toward the villains, they were gone and the only thing she could see in their place were two little grasshoppers running on two legs.}

“Tranformation types?” Izuku asks aloud.

{“Eat our dust!” One of them screamed in a high-pitched voice. “Hotta Jump!”

They both jumped over the heroes' heads and were out the door before Nejire could even wrap her head around their quirks. They would never be able to keep track of something so small long enough to give chase.}

“Which is why I have to deal with them.” Aizawa sighs once again.

{Tamaki sighed, “Well...at least we got the vase.”

“But I wanted to catch them!” Nejire pouted. “What even is this thing anyway?”

It looked like any fancy terracotta vase, but instead of a scene from mythology painted on it, it was a giant #2. Nejire smiled as she remembered what Powerloader had told them about each of the objectives having a number, “So we just need to protect this from the other villains!”}

“You say that like it’ll be easy.” Tamaki whines.

{Mirio nodded, “Yeah, we’ll take it back to the agency so it can be better defended. It’s *definitely* the second objective. How many were there again?”

“For the villains? Thirteen.” Tamaki shuttered. “But they get extra credit for any heroes they kill.”

Mirio grinned, “Well then, we just won’t let them kill us!”}

“Famous last words.”
“Let me know how that turns out.”
“Pride before the fall.”
“That poor fool.”
“You can certainly try.”
“Good luck with that.”

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP... Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

The attack on the USJ begins!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

The USJ

“Ah shit, here we go again.” Kaminari comments.

{Uraraka patted Iida on the back as he whined about the bus’s open layout. Izuku shook his head, hopefully, Iida would calm down a little as time went on. Izuku thought it’d be very stressful to be so uptight when most of the other students were so lax, but then again, he’d insisted on being a hero for years even when everyone around told him to give up, so he didn’t really have room to talk.}

“You really think that?” Iida asks.

Izuku shrugs “I know obsession, I get it.”

{“Hey Midoriya,” Asui said, “did you really work with pro heroes before coming to UA?”

“Umm, yeah.” Izuku smiled sheepishly, “But, um, it really wasn’t intentional. I just kinda reached out to give them quirk analyses, and it grew from there....yeah.”}

“How is this kid so humble?” Hawks asks.

“A decade-plus of discrimination.” Mirko scoffs.

{“That’s so manly!” Kirishima said. “But why did you decide to be a hero rather than just being support?”

“Yeah,” Kaminari said, “doesn’t seem to make much sense cause you’re…”

Jiro hit him in the eye with one of her jacks, “Don’t pay any attention to him, Midioriya, you don’t have to explain yourself if you don’t want to.”}

“Thanks, Jiro.” Izuku says.

“Can’t even be mad.” Kaminari comments.

{“But it is kinda a question.” Kirishima said. “Even those of us with quirks might not make it. Take me for example, my quirk’s strong and good in a fight, but it’s not flashy at all, so I’ll probably never be very popular.”}

Headcase snorts. Bakugo gestures to *her* making sure Kirishima caught *her* reaction to that comment.

{“Well, I’m not trying to be popular.” Izuku said quickly. “And besides, I think your quirk looks really cool!”}

“Many entities do.” Headcase comments.

“Am I really that popular in the multiverse?” Kirishima asks.

“Oh yes, I think you’re... ninth? Yes, you’re ninth in popularity.” Headcase tells him.

“Like in the class right?” he clarifies.

“Overall actually.” she informs the crowd “that includes heroes and villains as well.”

“Whoah whoah whoah, people like us?” Dabi says incredulously.

“Well, a tree within the multiverse isn’t really worth much without a decent villain or two.”

“What are our places!?” Toga begs.

Headcase rolls her eyes “we can’t go over all of them and only the top 20 are recorded.”

“Top three, then we move on.” Bakugo bargains.

The entity sighs. “Bakugo, Midoriya, and Shoto.” She cuts off any more questions. “**Watch.**”

{“You think so?” Kirishima grinned. “Sure seems like it’d be easier if I had a flashier quirk.”

“Like mine you mean?” Aoyama sparkled as he struck a pose and Izuku vibrated in excitement as he realized that passive sparkle probably was really part of his quirk. Did Aoyama realize he was doing that? The sparkle dimmed slightly when Ashido mentioned his quirks drawback, did that mean that aspect of his quirk was linked to his emotions? What emotions would make the sparkle brighter? Happiness? Or could fear potentially do the same thing?}

“Sensei is right I really must improve my situational awareness, I did not even realize...” Aoyama comments.

{Katsuki pouted in the back of the bus. Seriously, why was there always so much fuss over Deku? Hadn’t he always been useless? He didn’t even have a quirk, much less a flashy quirk perfect for being a hero like Katsuki. All he had was way too much stubbornness for his own good.}

“Perhaps I shouldn’t bring up the times he’s become a god or faced one in the multiverse.” Headcase remarks to *her*self. Those that overheard *her* chose not to comment.

{“Well,” Kirishima sighed, “if any of our classmates have pro quirks, it’s Todoroki and Bakugo.”

“Yeah,” Tsu said, “but Bakugo will never be popular with his temper.”}

“The polls say different!” Bakugo shouts at the screen.

{Katsuki was about to blow up at her, show her what a temper *really* looked like but stopped. Aizawa was sleeping at the front of the bus, but there was no guarantee he wouldn’t wake up if Katsuki exploded. But what had Hound Dog said? He was allowed to be a jerk, but couldn’t hurt people? Something like that? Why did this have to be so complicated?}

”Progress!” The Bakusquad cheers.

{“Shut up frog-face!” There, that wouldn’t get him in trouble, would it?}

“I’ve been called worse.” Tsu dismisses.

“Such as?” Midoriya asks.

“I’d rather not get into it right now, kero.”

{“Yeah, Bakugo.” Kaminari laughed. “We’ve only known you a few days, but we already know your personality is a flaming pile of garbage.”}

“Wow, a hero kid said shit like that?” Shigaraki scoffs.

{Katsuki grit his teeth and jumped to his feet. So much for not being hurtful, this idiot had to know his place! “I’ll kick your ass, you idiot loser. You’re going to regret ever applying to UA!”

“Bakugo…” Aizawa said warningly and Katsuki huffed, sitting back down. Whatever, these idiots were just obstacles in his path anyway.}

“I know we’re the villains and all that, but I think losing his Temper like that is justified.” Himiko suggests.

{Izuku stared at the exchange with wide eyes. There was something different about Katsuki. Yeah, he’d blown up at Kaminari, but, while he’d been rude to Asui, he was much tamer than Izuku had ever seen him. It was almost as if he’d been trying to hold himself back...or maybe it was just because Asui was a girl? That’d make sense, but Izuku didn’t think he’d ever seen Katsuki hold back before, regardless of who his target was. What was going on with the world? Katsuki was getting teased and holding himself back while Izuku was getting praised. Had he been dropped in some sort of alternate universe by accident where nothing worked like it was supposed to?}

“And now I know why you looked like you were having an existential crisis on that bus back then.” Ochako chuckles at Izuku.

“Yeah, it was... an experience.” He agrees.

{The bus slowed to a stop in front of a giant training facility and the class piled out to see Thirteen standing on the steps and Izuku grinned widely. Thirteen was one of the heroes he’d never had

the chance to work with since they were a rescue-hero and didn't need his analysis.}

"We might ask for personal analysis if he ever gets to that point." Thirteen informs their fellow teachers.

"With the help of our esteemed counselor, I intend to help him reach that point." Nedzu claims with certainty in his voice.

{"Oh my goodness!" Uraraka squealed. "Thirteen is one of my favorite heroes! Do you think they'd give me an autograph if I asked?"

"Hello students!" Thirteen gestured for the students to follow them inside. "I created this training facility to help you deal with different types of disasters, you can call it the USJ, or the Unforeseen Simulation Joint."}

"Really wanted to match that acronym, huh?" Mirko snickers.

{"Hey, shouldn't All Might be here already?" Aizawa slouched lazily as he walked up to Thirteen, who pulled him to the side and said something Izuku couldn't hear while raising three fingers. Izuku felt his heart sink, he'd thought there were too many articles on All Might this morning. He knew he couldn't tell All Might to just not save people, but he also had a responsibility as a teacher, didn't he?}

"I was more worried about All Might back then, though to be fair he'd already apologized for being callus when we first met." Izuku mentions.

"Did he ever tell you why?" Shinsou asks.

"He did, and we aren't talking about it unless one of these stories brings it up." Izuku says firmly.

{Aizawa sighed loudly, "We should just get started."

"Excellent!" Thirteen sounded like they were smiling. "Before we begin, I'm sure you're aware I have a powerful quirk, Black Hole, that can suck up anything and turn it to dust. I use it to save people from all kinds of disasters, but it could just as easily be used to kill.}

"Wait, they addressed this during their *second* heroics class?" Spinner

asks seeming to question himself more than anyone else.

{_With all the regulations on quirks in our superhuman society, we often forget how deadly they can be, so make sure you keep in mind not only the good you can do but also the harm if you aren't paying enough attention or make a wrong move. But today, you'll be learning to use your quirks to help people, because that's what being a hero is all about!"}"

"Or it should be." Compress agrees.

{"Alright, settle down." Aizawa's tired voice cut through the class's applause. "Now that that's over…"

The class gasped as the lights went out and the fountain started to malfunction as a dark purple mist gathered in front of it. Izuku's eyes widened as he noticed a pair of yellow eyes and far too many hands emerging from the mist.}

"Go boss!" Toga cheers.

{"Stay together and don't move." Aizawa ordered. "Thirteen, protect the students."

"What is that thing?" Kirishima asked.

"It looks like some sort of warp quirk." Izuku made sure his muttering was loud enough for Aizawa to hear. "It doesn't appear to have any limit on space and from here it's impossible to tell if it has limits on distance, but I don't think it does or else villains would have to infiltrate inside UA's walls first and the alarms would have gone off. Speaking of alarms, they're probably using a quirk to jam the signals and that's why the lights went off. That person was probably warped over first and could be hiding anywhere."}

"In the mountain zone as a matter of fact." Tsukauchi agrees,

{Aizawa nodded as he took in the info. Most of the students were still confused and hadn't quite realized they were under attack yet. There were some whispers that they hadn't known the training would start quite so soon and wasn't it supposed to be rescue training? A few of the braver students tried to step forward, only to stop as Aizawa yelled at them.

"Stay back! Those are villains."}

“Context clues, kids, use them.” Mirko snarks.

{The class gasped and looked at the intruders with new eyes, but Izuku was already too busy forming his analysis and figuring out weaknesses he and Aizawa could exploit.

“Perplexing.” The mist villain said. “It appears our information was wrong. All Might should be here.”}

All Might flinches. Knowing it was coming not making hearing it any easier.

{“So you used the press as a cover and sneaked onto campus.” Aizawa gripped his capture weapon.

“But we went through the trouble of bringing so many friends.” The villain with all the hands seemed to be in charge. “Maybe he’ll show up if we kill a few kids.”}

“Forgive me Shigaraki but… what was the logic there?” Compress asks.

“That’s how it works in games.” Tomura states earning himself a few looks. “I know!” He retorts defensively

{“They chose this isolated facility at a time a class was being taught.” Todoroki said. “They’ve thought this out, so they must have an objective, but what is it?”}

“Me.” All Might whispers dejectedly.

{“Kaminari.” Aizawa didn’t look away from the villains. “Try contacting the school. Thirteen, get them out of here.”

Izuku ran up to join Aizawa, “I’m coming to fight with you.”

Aizawa glared at him, “No, Deku, it’s too dangerous. You’re leaving and that’s an order.”}

“Please listen to me.” Aizawa begs his friends too tense to tease him for it.

{“But your fighting style…”

“I said no.”

They glared at each other for a long moment before Izuku huffed

and looked away, “Fine, but if you die, I will kill you myself.”}

Snort
“Makes sense.”
giggle
“Sure.”

{Eraser nodded and lept down the steps, taking down all the villains in his way.

Izuku turned to Thirteen, “We need to get out of here. Is there a closer exit?”

When Thirteen shook their head, Izuku cursed and led the class in running toward the doors, but the mist villain cut them off before they could leave.}

“Go Giri!”
“Run!”
“Fuck off!”

{“Hello, we are the league of villains. I know it’s impolite, but we invited ourselves here to say hello. Isn’t this a fitting place for the symbol of peace to die?”}

“Damn, I never saw him in action outside of redirecting our attacks but Kurogiri is intimidating as hell.” Dabi says a little impressed.

{Kirishima and Katsuki didn’t waste any time as they ran at the villain, but when the smoke from Katsuki’s explosion cleared, the villain was still standing tall.}

“Well *that’s* not gonna work.” Twice comments. *”It’s super effective!”*

{“Hmm, that was close…” he muttered. “You live up to your school’s reputation.”

“The mist villain has a weakness.” Izuku muttered. “His real body is protected by metal plating.”}

“If only I was calm enough for that in our own world.” Izuku bemoans.

{“You two, out of the way right now!” Thirteen yelled, but it was too late. The mist villain had already surrounded them with tendrils of dark smoke, then Izuku was falling. He just barely had

time to take a deep breath before he plunged deep into the rescue pool. He immediately started swimming upward, but his eyes widened when he saw a shark swimming toward him and he froze.}

“No! Don’t freeze!” Ururaka shrieks.

“Hey, hey, I’m right here.” Midoriya reminds her with a hand on her shoulder.

{_ There wasn’t anything he could do. He wasn’t used to fighting in water and he was starting to run out of air. Izuku flinched as the shark opened his jaw, but then Asui managed to kick the villain in the face and wrap her tongue around Izuku. She was already holding Mineta under one arm.}

“Tsu-Chan!”
“Well done Asui-san!”
“Froppy to the rescue!”

{She tossed Izuku up to the deck of the shipwreck, then tossed Mineta up a few seconds later, much less gently.}

“Good.”
“Deserved.”
“She’s too good for this world.”

{_ Izuku shook his head, it wouldn’t surprise him if Mineta had managed to say something inappropriate even in a life-threatening situation.}

“He did, kero.” Tsu reminds.

“I remember.” Izuku sighs.

{_ It was only the first week of school and Izuku had already noticed all the girls hated him. Hopefully being around the strong women of the hero course would teach him a little respect.}

All the girls and some of the boys express doubt at this.

{Asui crawled up the side of the ship and Izuku smiled at her, “Thanks Asui, you saved my life.”

“I told you to call me Tsu!” Asui croaked.

As Izuku frantically apologized, Asui looked out at the villains

who were gathering in the water, “This is turning out to be a terrible day of class.”}

“No shit.”
“You think?”
“Oh really?”

{“Yeah,” Izuku frowned, “I keep thinking about what that villain said. They planned this to kill All Might.”

“But that doesn’t matter!” Mineta smiled. “As soon as All Might shows up, they’re toast!”}

A good chunk of the audience winces knowing for a fact how untrue that could be.

{“I’m not so sure.” Asui said thoughtfully. “If they planned this to kill All Might, they probably have a way to kill him. We should probably focus on not getting tortured to death, though.”}

Dabi snorts “When she puts it that way…” he chuckles.

{“No!” Mineta was starting to panic. “Tell Frog-boobs to shut up!”}

Mineta suddenly finds himself pelted from all sides by any manner of snack wrappers and empty cups.

{Izuku glared at him. Even Katsuki’s nicknames weren’t that bad, and at least he wouldn’t panic and make an already difficult situation worse. Mineta responded by screaming again when he saw how close the villains were getting to the ship.

“There’s just one thing that doesn’t add up though.” Izuku pinched his lower lip in thought. “They sent you here, Asu…I mean Tsu!”}

“It would have been better if I grabbed the class roster too.” Shigaraki groans “I get it.”

{“Why does it matter that she’s here!?” Mineta screamed.

Izuku looked at the other two. Mineta was starting to cry, but Asui was looking at him curiously.

Izuku took a deep breath, “It means they don’t know your quirks.”

"You're right." Asui pointed at the fire zone. "It would have been better to send me there, but they didn't." She points out the fire zone.

Izuku nodded, "Maybe we can use that to our advantage. For all they know, the three of us could be super powerful."}

"Oh don't do it." Kaminari says.

{"But you're not super powerful!" Mineta yelled. "You're quirkless! What are you supposed to do?"}

"Oh, my God." Kaminari continues.

{Izuku froze. Mineta was right, wasn't he? What could he do? He was a quick thinker, but how was that going to help here? Was he really useless in this situation?}

"NO!"
"DAMN IT MINETA!"
"He'll figure something out!"

{Asui slapped Mineta over the head with her tongue, "Be quiet. Midoriya has to think if we want to get out of here and he can't do that if you're insulting him."}

Shinsou snorts "You better thank her for that one Midoriya."

"I was about to." Izuku pouts.

{Mineta opened his mouth to protest, but shut up when Asui slapped him again. Izuku took a deep breath, "Alright, let's talk quirks. What can you two do?"

"I can jump far, cling to pretty much any wall, and stick out my tongue about twenty meters." Asui said. "I can also spit out my stomach so I can clean it and secrete a poisonous mucus that just stings a bit."

Mineta had started drooling when Asui mentioned mucus, }

"Really?" Spinner asks with a scowl.

{_ but he came back to earth with another slap from Asui.

"These sticky balls on my head pop off and stick to anything, but their strength depends on how I'm feeling that day. They don't

stick to me, though, I just bounce right off them." He stared at the others for a minute before he started sobbing again. "This is why I told you we should wait for the real heroes! My quirk is useless for combat!"}

"Great for traps though." Izuku mumbles.

{The boat shuddered as a hard blade of water cut through it, then started to sink.}

"*That's* what happened to the ship!?" Ururaka demands. With how close the three had gotten to the leaders no one had the guts to ask them much of what happened that day and are now sorely wishing they had.

{"I'm starting to get bored!" One of the villains yelled.

Asui looked skeptically at Mineta, who had started screaming again and was launching his balls at the villains in panic, "Mineta, are you sure the hero thing is right for you?"

"It's weirder not to be scared right now!" Mineta cried. "I can't believe I'm gonna die without ever touching Yaoyorozu's boobs!"}

"Ew."
"Gross."
"Seriously?"

{Asui sighed and Izuku looked at the villains, "Wait, they're afraid to touch them...and they're sure of their victory, which means they're bound to make a mistake…"

"What are you talking about?" Mineta sniffed.

Izuku smiled, "I have an idea. Mineta, give me your scarf!"}

"Any ideas?" Shinsou asks quietly.

"Maybe... A chain with his scarf and balls." Izuku suggests "That sounded weird."

{Asui pulled the scarf off his cape when Mineta hesitated and handed it to Izuku. Izuku pulled out his grappling hook and wrapped the scarf around it, "Alright Mineta, create a chain using your balls and stick it to the scarf. We're going to shoot out the

line with the sticky chain attached, then bring it back to capture the villains and stick them to the boat."}

"Not a bad plan." Gran considers.

{"Hmm," Asui frowned, "I think it'd be better if I jumped out into the water and swam around the periphery with the chain before shooting the gun at the grip to tighten it. That way we can capture all the villains, not just a few."}

"That's risky." Aizawa frowns.

{Izuku nodded, "It'll be dangerous though. Are you sure you can swim faster than they can?"

Asui shrugged, "I can try. And if I can't, I'll just shoot the gun back at the boat early and ride it back up."}

"Always good to have a backup plan." Nedzu praises.

{Mineta made a chain about the length of the boat, pulling it tight as Asui jumped down into the water and started swimming. Mineta kept adding balls as fast as he could pull them off as Asui swam farther, rocketing past the villains, who were jeering at her for leaving her classmates behind. Most of them were so busy jeering that they didn't notice the chain, but the ones that did notice just swam a few feet back so they weren't touching the balls.}

"Something tells me this is going to be more effective than it should be." Todoroki states.

{When Asui finished her loop around the villains, she shot the hook back at the boat, which tightened the loop suddenly, catching most of the villains by surprise and immobilizing them as they got stuck. Izuku looked out over the water as Asui unwrapped the scarf from around the hook and hopped with it once around the boat to tighten the loop further. There were a few villains who had escaped, but not enough that they couldn't beat them in shallow water. Asui shoved Mineta unceremoniously under her arm and wrapped her tongue around Izuku, then jumped as far as she could toward the shore. A few villains followed them, but Izuku shot them with rubber bullets before they could get too close.}

"Not me briefly forgetting Midoriya had a gun in this one." Sero

murmurs.

{“Let’s get back to the entrance.” Asui said. “We can go around so we don’t run into the villains Aizawa is facing.”

Izuku clenched his fist, “I know how Eraser fights. He won’t last much longer against a big group like that and he’s just going to get hurt because he was trying to keep us safe. I’m gonna go help him.”}

“I still don’t know if I regret that decision or not.” Izuku mentions.

“I get that, keep.” Tsu agrees “It’s like we were in danger, a lot of danger, but Sensei might not have… Kero.”

{Mineta stared at him incredulously, “Are you trying to get us killed or something?”

“I’m not saying we should jump into the middle of the battle or anything.” Izuku said. “But maybe we could find a way to pick off some of the weaker ones so Eraser doesn’t have to worry about them.”}

“I wish he’d just go to the entrance.” Aizawa laments.

{They crouched behind the lip of rock on the shoreline once Izuku promised that they’d run as soon as things got dangerous.}

Izuku winces knowing that isn’t likely to happen.

{_Eraser was still doing ok and he still looked as intimidating as ever, but Izuku could tell he was slowing down, panting between villains and letting his hair stay down for a few milliseconds longer between erasures. As Izuku watched, the hand villain rushed him and laid a hand on his elbow right when he blinked. Eraser’s elbow began to flake away as the sleeve and skin disintegrated under the villain’s touch. A disintegration quirk? Probably five-point if the hands were any indication.}

Hiss
“Oh, Sensei.”
“He survived, he will survive.”

{Eraser managed to keep fighting, even though his injured arm was flapping uselessly at his side, but the hand villain just laughed, “You really are so cool, Eraserhead! But I’m not the final

boss here, Nomu is."

A giant man with a bird beak slammed Eraser into the ground with one punch and broke his already injured arm. }

"SENSEI!"
"This is awful."
"Please be okay."

{"Eraser!"}

"No! Damnit problem child!" Aizawa calls out.

"I didn't yell back then! Why...?" Izuku questions.

"Your Sensei wasn't your friend back then." Mei reminds him quieter than normal.

{_ The hand villain looked over at him and Izuku swallowed as he saw Eraser's panicked expression as he struggled to lift his head up, only to have his face ground into the floor again by the villain. Asui was tugging at his arm, trying to get him to crouch back down, but Izuku didn't even remember standing up.

"Ahh." The hand villain grinned beneath the strange hand mask on his face. "You must be Deku. Sensei gave me a side quest for you..."}

"WHAT!?"
"NO!"
"IT ENDS THERE?!"
"HOW DARE!?"
"Nonononononono!"
"Stay away from him!"
"EVERYBODY SHUT UP SO WE CAN GET BACK TO THIS SOONER!"

With some reluctance, the crowd settles in for the next chapter.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

The moment you've all been waiting for!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Endeavor

"Oh, come on!"

{Endeavor was hosting a press conference.}

"This'll go well." Dabi comments sarcastically.

{He practically growled when yet another reporter had the audacity to question his property damage. Seriously? Who cared if a few buildings burned down as long as he put those villain scum where they belonged?}

"Well, that's uncomfortably familiar." Bakugo grumbles to himself.

{_ He wouldn't even be holding this press conference but his PR team insisted that it was important to be visible if he wanted to maintain his place as the number one hero, especially since some idiot wannabe reporter had released his *sealed* property damage reports yesterday. He was going to find whatever idiot thought *that* was a good idea and ruin their career, but first, he had a press conference to get through.}

"A thousand yen says Mastermind hired La Brava to release that." Izuku suggests.

"That's a suckers bet and I ain't no sucker." Ururaka scoffs playfully.

{“Endeavor, what do you have to say about your missing son, Shouto? Are you any closer to finding him?”}

Todoroki lets out a huff that might be a laugh.

{Endeavor grits his teeth. Of course, they were trying to bait him by reminding him that his masterpiece was still missing, “There have been no leads at this time, but I assure you that I *will* find Shouto and bring him home. Those villains are going to regret taking my son.”}

“*Sure.*” Dabi drawls.

{“Well, that’s rather rude, isn’t it Father?” All eyes went to the speaker and Endeavor's eyes widened as he saw his son walking up behind the mass of reporters, the villain Dabi smirking beside him, “If you wanted to talk to me so badly, you could have just asked. No point in making threats if you can’t follow through with them.”}

“Ooh, the timing.” Kaminari chuckles.

“You good dude?” Sero asks.

“No.” Kaminari answers still smiling.

{The reporters parted to let Shouto and Dabi through, most scrambling to get out of the way of a known villain while the braver ones shoved mics in Shouto’s face. Both kinds were ignored as Shouto and Dabi continued moving toward Endeavor, staring at him steadily. Endeavor cursed. He wanted to attack Dabi, but couldn’t risk harming Shouto, not to mention the impact it would have on his rating if any of these stupid reporters ended up as collateral damage.}

“Yes, because the ratings are *so* important.” Mirko growls clearly annoyed with the entire situation.

{Shouto had changed since he last saw him. He’d cut his hair, for one, wearing it in some ridiculous style that was popular among the uncultured masses for some reason.}

“Fuck you, he looks hot!”
“Uncultured? Like you’re one to talk.”
“Asshole.”

{_ Endeavor scowled. He'd have to make sure Shouto grew his hair out again so he looked dignified and set himself apart from the rabble.}

"Boooo."

{_ He also carried himself with more confidence, which Endeavor would be almost proud of if his masterpiece wasn't walking side by side with a villain without attacking him.}

Crude gestures are thrown at the screen.

{Shouto's outfit was frankly ridiculous, it was almost as if he'd picked it out to *match Dabi*, but that couldn't be right. His masterpiece would never sink so low, so it was probably some horrific coincidence or something the villains had forced him into.}

"Oh, just wait." Dabi chuckles.

{_He wore a dark red tank top and black jeans with holes in them. He'd paired the outfit with a billowing navy overcoat similar to Dabi's, except without sleeves, showing off his muscular arms. Another unfortunate choice Endeavor would have to beat out of him.}

"You won't get the chance~" Toga sings.

{Shouto felt powerful. He could hear whispers running through the crowd, wondering if he'd escaped and what he was doing with a member of the league. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see a few horrified expressions as some of the smarter reporters connected the dots. Good.}

"And it's barely begun." Shigaraki grins.

{Endeavor was scowling at him, most likely judging his new aesthetic and fantasizing about the best way to beat it out of him.}

"It's sad how predictable he is." Shinsou remarks.

{_ Too bad he'd never get the chance. He could see Endeavor mentally weighing the benefits of flat-out attacking Dabi right then, but Shouto knew his father wouldn't be able to without risking his ever-important popularity rating. Endeavor was

predictable if nothing else.}

“He’s got your number.” Hawks teases.

{It was going to make him easy to kill.}

Endeavor scoffs.

{“Shouto. I give you permission to freeze that villain.” Oh, so that’s how Endeavor was going to play this, huh? Just give Shouto emergency permission, then he won’t have to worry about his popularity going down even if there was collateral damage because what father wouldn’t encourage his son to protect himself?}

“Mine.” Izuku mumbles.

“What?” Todoroki asks.

“I said “a bad one.”” Izuku responds smoothly.

{Shouto gave his best innocently confused expression, “But, Father, why would I attack my own brother?”}

“Pfft!”
Snort
“Oh, my God.”

{Whispers broke out among the reporters and Shouto glared at Endeavor, “Oh, that’s right. I don’t think you ever told them about Touya, did you? After all, he didn’t have the *perfect quirk* like I did,” Shouto spat, “he was just another one of our mother’s failures. Isn’t that what you told us growing up?”}

“Damn, this is savage.” Shinsou remarks.

{“Hey Dad.” Dabi smiled. “Did you miss me?”}

“Dabi why?” Spinner asks barely holding back laughter.

“Why not?” He smirks.

{Some of the reporters were on their phones, trying to figure out if Touya Todoroki really existed. The records wouldn’t be too difficult to find, Izuku had made sure of that. Endeavor himself looked like he’d seen a ghost, which in a way, Shouto supposed he had. It must be difficult to have the runaway son you’d written

off as dead come back into your life as a villain.}

No one notices Endevour's flinch.

Except for their host.

{"By the way Father, I won't be… how did you put it? Ah, that's right, *coming home* anytime soon. In fact, I don't intend to come home at all." He felt a thrill at Endeavor's enraged expression. "I'm not just Shouto anymore." Shouto said, tossing his arms out to his sides dramatically as he stared down his father, "I go by Freezerburn now."}

"Ooooh!"
"Now that's a villain's name!"
"Chills, literal chills!"

{In unison, both he and Dabi shot fire at Endeavor, who simply scowled and remained unmoved. Some of the smarter reporters started to run away and Shouto rolled his eyes and froze them in place. Their plan relied on having a *captive* audience, after all.}

"Well, that's one way to weaponize the media." Aizawa remarks.

"Sho!" Mic scolds.

"You threaten the vultures on a regular basis, don't start with me." Aizawa snaps back.

Midnight cackles. "He's got you there"

{"Ah, ah, ah! We can't have that!" Dabi sent a jet of superheated flame out to the side and ignited a trail of gasoline they had set before the press conference, creating a massive wall of flame around the area. The reporters started to scream and push against each other as they realized they were boxed in.}

"That's going to have damaging effects on Japan's media presence." Tsukauchi wines.

{"Give up this childish rebellion, Shouto." Endeavor's voice rose above the sounds of the flames, "I don't know what poisonous lies this man been telling you, but I created you to be a hero, not whatever this is. Don't ruin your future."}

"He is actively rejecting his position of your heir and you're going on

about *creating* him?" Monoma scoffs.

{The media had started to calm down despite the hostage situation and had their cameras trained on Shouto, waiting for his next move. He returned his father's glare, "What future? My future as a hero? Or a future as your masterpiece?" Endeavor's eyes widened minutely. "Either way, it's no great loss. I didn't ask for either one."}

"I didn't ask for his *help*." Todoroki comments. "I still want to be a hero."

"We know that Todoroki." Midoriya assures.

{"Shouto…" Endeavor growled, but Shouto ignored him, making sure to speak loud enough that the cameras could hear him.

"You were the one that forced my mother into a marriage she didn't want, just to get your hands on her quirk. You were the one that isolated me from the world from the moment my quirk manifested so that others wouldn't *get in my way*. You were the one who beat me black and blue every day of my childhood and called it training."}

"Drag him!"
"Preach!"
"Send him to the Shadow Relm!"

{The only sounds that could be heard were the roar of the flames and the approaching sirens. The media held their breath as they waited to see how Endeavor would respond to his accusations.

"Come home, Shouto. You *will* become a hero."}

"Not even denying it." Rock Lock growls.

"If these kids don't kill him the public might." Amplifier jokes.

{Shouto sighed and shook his head, "If being a hero means being like you, I'd rather be a villain." He looked up at his father, "At least I'm being honest about who I really am."}

"Shade." Sero tsks.

{"Enough, Shouto." Endeavor growled. "I will not stand for this!"

"Then fall."}

“That smooth motherfucker.”
“Damn.”
“Living up to his villain name.”

{_ Shouto stomped down with his right foot and sent a river of ice toward the podium his father was standing behind, encasing it in solid ice. Endeavor simply kicked the block, knocking it to the floor where it shattered with an icy crash. He ran at Shouto but had temporarily forgotten about Dabi, who came at him from behind, barbequing his back with blue fire.}

“Situational awareness dumbass.” Aizawa growls.

{“Hmph,” Endeavor turned toward Dabi with contempt, “did you forget that never worked when you were younger, Touya?”

“Oh, I’m just warming up!” Dabi taunted. “Besides, you can’t even go all out right now because of all these reporters, so you can’t hurt me either.”}

“Wanna bet.” Endeavor growls.

“Shut your mouth you flaming trashcan!” Mirko hisses.

{Endeavor shot a ball of flame at Dabi, who dodged to stand beside Shouto in front of the reporters, effectively using them as a shield.

“If we’re going to fight, let’s fight!” Endeavor yelled. “Only cowards use hostages.”

“And only cowards beat their kids, so I guess that makes us even!” Dabi yelled back.}

“Truth!”
“What he said!”
“He has a point!”

{The sirens were getting closer now, they’d probably arrive in under a minute along with at least a handful of heroes. Shouto and Dabi exchanged a look before turning around and firing into the crowd, superheating the air, but being sure to keep their attacks weak enough that the reporters would only be injured, not killed. Arriving heroes wouldn’t be distracted by rescuing corpses, after all.}

Shoto winces. “I hate that that’s the reason he’s not killing people.”

“Especially when we can’t be sure how much any of us will care about collateral damage.” Izuku agrees.

{Endeavor tackled Dabi, obviously seeing him as the bigger threat. Shouto rolled his eyes and switched to ice. Might as well create a variety of injuries for the heroes to deal with when they arrived. Dabi and Endeavor grappled on the ground for a few moments before the fire trucks arrived and water started falling. A few hoses focused on carving pathways through the wall of flames, allowing some heroes through. They took one look at the hundred or so injured, screaming reporters and cursed.}

“They’re using the phrase “prioritize the rescue” against us.” Ectoplasm comments.

{“Let’s take this elsewhere, yeah?” Dabi smiled. “You wouldn’t want to get in the way of the rescue efforts, would you?”

He got up and ran away with Shouto on his heels, letting Endeavor chase after them. Apparently the area of the city they were in had already been evacuated, because they didn’t run into anyone else. The other heroes apparently trusted that Endeavor could take care of his sons and didn’t come to help. Everything was going according to plan.}

“Of course it is.” Izuku sighs in disappointment though not an once of surprise could be found in his voice.

“You were right, you said his arrogance would get him killed before.” Iida comments no doubt remembering their dinners now filled with theorizing bets and predictions. The entity won’t let them discuss possible spoilers in the theater, but she never enters the dorms.

{Shouto caught Dabi’s eye and they headed into an evacuated office building, making it a few floors up before turning around and letting Endeavor catch up to them. Endeavor burst in through the door, rage mixing with betrayal in his eyes, which just made Shouto angrier. What right did he have to feel betrayed after what he had done to them?}

“Fair.”
“The audacity of this bitch.”
“Who am I supposed to route for?”

{“You’re weak, boys.” Endeavor advanced with flames in both his hands. “I thought I raised you better than this.”

“Oh Dad.” Dabi replied, “This *is* what you raised us for.”}

“Ooh, this kid just called Endeavor a villain.” Hawks says in a taunting manner one would hear from a child seeing someone else get in trouble.

“To be fair, the little shit is right.” Mirko snarks.

{Endeavor sent a stream of fire at Dabi, who returned it with one of his own. The enclosed space turned into an oven as the flames burned hotter and the heat was unable to escape. Shouto used his right side to cool both himself and his brother but left Endeavor to overheat.}

“Doesn’t look good for Endeavour.” Midnight comments.

“Doesn’t look good for any of us.” Mic agrees.

“The question is: how bad is this going to get?” Aizawa sighs.

{“I’ve indulged you for far too long. Let’s finish this.” Endeavor said. “It’s a shame to have to damage my masterpiece, but it’s worth it to get you back on track. *Flashfire Fist: Prominence Burn!* ”}

“It’s that type of thinking that landed us in this situation in the first place.” Thirteen remarks frustrated.

{Shouto created a massive dome of ice just in time to shield them from the attack, but it was vaporized almost instantly. The jet of fire ripped through the wall behind them and pushed both him and Dabi out onto the street. Shouto could dimly hear a helicopter recording the fight from above.}

“Oh God, this is going to be broadcasted!” Amplifier exclaims with dread.

“And here I thought they’d gotten away from the cameras.” Rock Lock sighs.

{“Dabi? Are you ok?” Shouto crouched next to his brother, who was kneeling on the ground and cooled the air around them.

“I’m fine, Shouto.” he grunted, standing up. “It’s not like I’m not

used to it."

"Surrender now." Endeavor ordered, jumping down to the street and walking toward them. He was breathing hard and sweat had soaked through his costume, which was only made worse by the raging fire behind him. Shouto gave Dabi a small smile, who returned it with a grin and created a firewall around the three of them.}

"He's on his last legs." Shigaraki grin glancing at his team and noting Dabi unresponsive as the burnt man's eyes are locked on the screen and a deranged grin spread across his face. Not that Tomura has any right to judge.

{"Seems like you're looking a little worse for the wear there, huh Dad?" Dabi taunted. "Isn't Prominence Burn one of those special moves that make you overheat?"

"It doesn't matter, villain." Endeavor kept advancing. "This fight won't last much longer."

"Are you sure about that?" Shouto stood up straight and frosted over his left side. "I can go on for hours."}

"The perfect balance of fire and ice," Tsukauchi sighs sadly "he got what he wanted."

"Yes," Yagi agrees "shame it will likely be his end."

{Endeavor scowled and shot another fireball at Shouto, who blocked it with an ice wall, "The more you use your fire, father, the more I can use my ice. You should know that, considering that it was you're the one who wanted this quirk so badly." }

"I think I'm going to be sick." Momo whispers.

"Just gotta remember ours is right here with a *real* and *good* support system." Jiro comforts.

"I should have known I was there." Momo counters.

"Were you?" Jiro asks "Yaomomo if this was going on before you met then he already had practice hiding it and you've said yourself he's never been social. How could you know?"

"I... Yes, you're right but..." Momo hesitates.

“I know.” Jiro comforts the girl.

{Endeavor was panting now, but stubbornly kept up his attacks, even letting loose another Prominence Burn, though the second was much weaker than the first had been. Shouto smiled slightly when Endeavor went to take a step, but stumbled, swaying slightly as he regained his balance. Shouto nodded at Dabi, who shot another fireball at Endeavor’s back. His heat exhaustion made him too slow to dodge it and he cried out as the flames burned him.

“How do you like *that*, Dad?” Dabi spat. “How does it feel to burn as you’re forced to overuse your quirk?”}

“Sweet catharsis.” Dabi grins, beginning to chuckle.

{Endeavor just grunted and shot another attack. Shouto glanced up at the news helicopter circling above them. They needed to wrap this up before more backup came.}

“Yeah! Come on, isn’t there going to be any blood!?” Toga cheers.

{“Well, Father,” Shouto stared Endeavor in the eyes when his father whipped around to face him, “I’d say goodbye, but it’s really more like good riddance.”}

“Burn!”
“That’s cold.”
“About time!”

{_ He slammed his right foot to the ground and sent jagged spears of ice toward his father. Endeavor’s eyes widened and he tried to dodge, but between Dabi’s flame wall and his own relentless attacks, he had gotten far too hot to continue the fight. A thick icicle hissed as it struck his chest, but as soon as it melted, it was replaced by another, each one penetrating deep into Endeavor’s torso. }

Toga cheered as Dabi started cackling uncontrollably.

{Dabi extinguished his firewall and watched as Shouto’s ice stopped melting immediately and instead turned red as it was coated with blood. He went to stand next to Shouto and watch their father’s face as his angry expression turned to one of pain, then faded altogether as the life left his eyes.}

Silence

The only sound is Dabi's laughter, even the league remains silent letting him have his moment.

> {There was a long moment where everything was silent. Shouto couldn't hear the roar of fires, the sound of the helicopter, the approaching sirens, or even Dabi asking him if he was ok. The only thing he could think was what he had just done. Shouto had actually killed that bastard for what he'd done to their family. Suddenly, he threw his head back and laughed. As hard as he tried, he couldn't stop it as he ran out of breath and felt his cheeks start to ache as Dabi joined in.
>
> He was free.}

The theater remained mostly silent the vast majority conflicted at the death of Endeavour. Former number two current number one. A classmate's abusive father. A hero to Japan. A villain to Shoto.

It takes a minute or two but eventually, each person turns to the only person making noise. Dabi's cackling had changed. Each person that turned to him had intended to quiet him but what they saw stopped them. The laughter went from cruel to hysterical. He finally got what he wanted, his father was dead at least in one world.

So why is he crying?

Headcase quickly throws up a barrier between the league and the crowd and began speaking with him.

"What the hell! What the hell!?" Dabi asks no one in particular "He's dead he's finally dead it was so satisfying! So why do I feel worse than before!?"

"What now?" Headcase asks gently.

"Wha..." Dabi starts very confusedly.

"What now? He's dead now what? You don't have any family. You put up such walls that the league is barely in the doorway. All you had was your revenge and now you, or at least a version of you, have it. What comes next?"

Dabi has a look of dread and confusion on his face as he whispers "I don't know."

“And that’s okay. Just think on that I’m sure you’ll find your way.” she gestures to the group to come a bit closer together as she steps back up to the controls. She starts the next chapter pointedly ignoring the questioning gazes of everyone else.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:tGG Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Making friends tends to be more difficult when you hate yourself.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Just Try

{“You should go mingle.”

Katsuki rolled his eyes at Amplifier, “Yeah, cause a five-minute conversation with an asshole is *really* gonna help these extras reintegrate into society.”}

“Well, you never know.” Sero remarks.

{They were currently doing an exercise where the villains had broken into smaller groups to talk about what they’d done wrong, something about admitting their mistakes out loud or something to give them the power to fix them. Katsuki thought it sounded fake, but maybe that was just because he was too big of a coward to admit what he’d done.}

“I don’t like him calling himself a coward.” Izuku grumbled.

“I get that,” Shinsou agreed “guys like that have a hard enough time with emotions without regret weighing them down.”

{“I’m just saying,” Amplifier nudged his arm gently, “you’ve been coming to these meetings for weeks and still haven’t made a single friend.”}

Bakugo opens his mouth to comment but is stopped by Kirishima “I

swear if you start going off about not having friends...”

{There were reasons for that. One, Katsuki didn’t want to do anything to jeopardize his chances of being a hero. Well, anything more than he’d already done. This was what led him to his second reason for keeping these extras at arm's length: they were better than him. How shitty was that? A bunch of convicted villains with tracking bracelets on their legs were better than the great Katsuki Bakugo! Sure, they’d done bad things, but at least they had good reasons, be it discrimination, money troubles, or even just bad friends, but Katsuki...he was just a jerk.}

“Sure because every teacher we ever had *never* gaslighted you into believing it wasn’t just your *right* but your *duty* to *put me in my place*.” Izuku hisses “And just because he never got physically violent like in these worlds doesn’t change what he *did* do.”

{Maybe this whole volunteering thing had been a mistake. These people didn’t need someone like Katsuki dragging them down. Hell if he was going to admit that though, and he had made a promise, so he was gonna fucking keep it.}

“That’s the spirit!?” Hawks comments questioningly.

{“Go on,” Amplifier smiled at him encouragingly, “if you go and talk to one of the groups for three minutes, I’ll let you brood for the rest of the time. Deal?”}

Snort
“Called out.”
Snicker

{“I’m not brooding.” Katsuki glared at her, but Amplifier just smiled. Damn, that face always worked on people at school, even the adults. Katsuki was gonna have to step up his intimidation game.}

“Good luck!” Amplifier cheers.

{Eventually, he sighed, “You’ll stop bitching at me to be social?”}

“*She* will.” Mina teases.

“What happened to all that tension keeping everyone quiet?” Bakugo groans.

“This whole experience is *great* practice for compartmentalization.” Kaminari chirps.

{She nodded, still smiling that infuriating little smile that meant that Katsuki had lost and she knew it. Still grumbling he made his way to the group with that tentacle-haired freak that kept trying to talk to him. What was his name? Ogawa? Whatever it was, it didn’t matter, because Katsuki was just there to get Amplifier off his back and then he’d be able to go back to...it wasn’t *brooding*, goddamn it!}

“Keep telling yourself that.” Dabi forces out, blatantly ignoring the raised eyebrows aimed at him.

{Katsuki grabbed a chair and sat on it backward so his arms were resting on the back. The villain who always wore pigtails, she said it had something to do with her quirk, was just finishing her story.

“So yeah,” she shrugged, “I robbed a couple of places, what are you gonna do? They were insured, so it’s not like I hurt anybody.”}

“At least there’s that?” Tsukauchi sighs.

{Katsuki scowled. Yet another way he was even worse than these scum. Even when committing crimes, they didn’t hurt people, whereas Katsuki had spent ten years hurting people for fun. He sucked.}

“No argument here.” Monoma mutters.

{“I don’t think that’s really the point.” Ogawa said. “Just because no one ended up hurt in the end doesn’t mean that stealing was the right thing to do. Maybe it has more to do with what effect our actions have on *us,* you know? Like what kind of person are we becoming?”}

Toga fidgets in her seat unsure of so many things.

{Katsuki couldn’t help scoffing, “Never took you for the sentimental type.”

Ogawa grinned, “Haven't spoken to me enough to really make a judgment, have you?”}

“He has a point.” Sero comments.

{“Whatever,” Katsuki huffed, “so what about you? What kind of person did your actions make the great tentacle-haired extra?”

The other villains in the circle laughed at the nickname, but Ogawa simply frowned and thought about the question for a minute, “I think...I think it made me lost. My crimes were never very big, like, I never committed any felonies or anything, but...I don’t know, I was just obsessed with the thrill more than anything. I think my mistakes made me selfish.”}

“That’s really insightful.” Hagakure comments.

“I think he’s gonna make it through this.” Ojirou agrees.

{“And what’s wrong with being a little selfish sometimes?” The Frankenstein-looking villain asked. Katsuki really needed to learn these people’s names...or at least come up with better nicknames for them.}

“It’d be nice if he could do that for his classmates.” Aizawa grumbles.

{“Nothing’s wrong with it!” Ogawa said quickly. “It’s just not who I want to be, you know? I don’t want to be the kind of guy that only thinks of myself.”}

“Should we remind Hagakure that she didn’t want to get attached to this guy?” Jiro suggests.

“I would say it’s already too late.” Momo answers.

{“What about you, Bakugo?” Pig-tailed bitch asked. “You ever made a mistake?”}

”Yes.”

{Too many to count, Katsuki thought as he glared at her, “You fuckers might be comfortable wearing your hearts on your sleeves, but don’t you drag me into this.”}

“Dear boy,” Compress comments “you volunteered.”

{“Technically, you dragged yourself.” Ogawa laughed. “Unlike the rest of us, you *volunteered* to be here.”

Yeah, well, how else was he gonna learn not to be so shitty, huh?

There was only so much someone could improve from a google search and someone like him didn't deserve to be a hero, much less number one. But again, he wasn't gonna just *say* that, "Fuck off."}

"This is getting sad." Midnight worries.

"Things always get worse before it gets better." Mic agrees.

{"Oooh," Pig-tails said, "looks like we hit a nerve. So what *did* you do? Cause with a reaction like that, it sure as hell wasn't nothing."}

"If he wasn't so defensive..." Shoji comments.

"Indeed." Tokoyami agrees.

{"Maybe I've never made a mistake in my life, you ever thought about that?" Katsuki snapped. "Or maybe I just don't like you!"

Frankenstein gave a booming laugh, "Yeah, I'll believe that."

"Hey, lay off him for a minute." Ogawa put a hand up to stop the teasing. "It takes a lot of trust to open up like we have been, and we can't scare Bakugo off when he's just gotten up the courage to talk to us."}

"So much for stopping the teasing." Shigaraki chuckles.

{"Fuck you!"

"Give it some time, Bakugo." Frankenstein said. "We're not so scary once you get to know us."

"I'm not a goddamn coward!" The lie tasted bitter on his tongue and he hated it. Why was he so fucking weak?!}

"You're not." Mirko scoffs.

"What's this?" Hawks teases "*The* Mirko being supportive? I've truly seen it all."

"Fuck off birdbrain!" She shouts back smacking him in the back of the head.

{Thankfully, Amplifier saved him from further pestering by calling their attention to the front. Katsuki was about to go back

to his place standing against the wall, but before he could stand, Ogawa, looked at him and cocked one eyebrow knowingly. Smug bastard. So Katsuki scoffed and settled back into his chair, determined to prove that he wasn't *scared.* He'd already lost to Amplifier when she accused him of brooding, so there was no way he was about to let Ogawa win by saying that Katsuki was too scared to be social or some shit. He'd stick around, get to know them, still hate them, and that would prove that smug little tentacle-haired bastard wrong!

Katsuki already hated himself, so it's not like he had any pride left to lose anyway.}

"I don't know which part to laugh at." Kaminari mentions.

"None of it!" Bakugo yells at the same time Sero says "All of it!"

{Izuku picked at his dinner, not feeling hungry despite how good the food looked. Mom had somehow picked up on his mood and come home a little early to make him Katsudon, which only succeeded in making him feel even worse. First, he'd gone out with a broken arm, then he'd gotten in a fight with Eraserhead, and then he couldn't even hide his guilt enough to keep his mom from worrying. He was the worst.}

"She's your mother she's supposed to worry about you!" Ururaka practically shrieks.

"But..." Izuku starts.

"No buts!" Mei scolds.

{"I think I'm going to save this for later." Izuku said finally. "I'm not really hungry right now."

Mom frowned at him, but nodded, "Is everything alright, baby? There are not any problems with your new school, are there?"

"No, no! School's great, I don't think I've ever enjoyed school more!" Izuku said frantically.}

"Tell me I'm not the only one who cringed at that." Hagakure wined.

"You're not." Koda whispers.

{"I'm glad." Mom gave a small, genuine smile. "But you don't

have to hide things from me, baby. I know you hid the bullying because you didn't want to worry me, but I want to know what's going on in your life. I'm strong, I can take it."}

"Careful what you wish for." Izuku mumbles.

"Midoriya, kero." Tsu says in a warning tone.

"Sorry."

{Izuku laughed as Mom flexed like All Might, pushing up the flab on her arms so it looked like muscles. After a moment, Mom couldn't keep a straight face and started laughing too. It was moments like this that were almost worth living for. Almost.}

"Damnit kid." Aizawa grumbles.

{Izuku bit his lip. He couldn't tell Mom about the whole thing with Eraserhead, because that would mean telling her about the vigilantism, which she didn't deserve no matter how strong she was, but maybe he could hint at some of it…

"Well, there's this guy who I run into online sometimes," well, online was pushing it, but he did talk to him through the computer whenever he hacked into the hero comms, "we run in a lot of the same circles…"

"A boy?" Mom teased. "Should I be worried about someone stealing my baby's heart?"}

Gag
"Ew, ew, ew, ew, ew."
"The implications!"

{Izuku blushed and grimaced, "Ew! No! It's not like that at all! He's like...a grumpy old uncle or something like that. Gross, no!"}

Midnight cackles ""Grumpy old uncle" he says!"

"Wow Sho, he really knows you!" Mic laughs. Aizawa just rolls his eyes at their antics.

{Mom chucked, "Alright. Still, you need to be careful about people you meet online, even if romance isn't involved. I don't want some creep showing up at our house all of a sudden."}

"First thing Eraser does the moment he discovers Viridian's identity."

Joke giggles.

{“Don’t worry, I’m very careful with my identity.” Izuku smiled briefly at his inside joke before letting his face fall as he continued, “But we kinda got in sort of a fight, and now I’m scared that he’s disappointed in me.”}

“An irrational fear.” Yagi sighs.

{Mom sat down next to him and started rubbing circles on his back, “What makes you think that?”

“He thinks I should be worried about having friends.” Izuku muttered. “But I don’t have any friends to be worried about.”}

“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”
“Yet.”

{Mom’s eyes started shining like she was about to cry, “Oh, baby…”

“And it’s fine!” Izuku said quickly. “I mean, I haven’t had friends in years, and online school is great and like I said, I run in the same circles as this guy, and they don’t seem to hate me yet, which is better than I usually get, but I just can’t help feeling like I’ve disappointed him because maybe I just haven’t been trying hard enough.”}

“Friendship isn’t easy but it shouldn’t be so difficult.” Kendo sighs.

{Mom was silent for a moment, still rubbing his back, “Well, you don’t have to do anything, but if you wanted to go out and try to make a friend, then I’d support you. If it works, then problem solved, and if they’re a jerk, then at least you can tell this guy you tried, right?”}

“Yes, that!” Ururaka points at the scene incessantly.

{“I…I guess that could work,” Izuku said slowly, “but who would I even…”

Izuku paused. He didn’t know a lot of people outside his middle school and anyone from there wasn’t going to work for this experiment. Who else did he…oh, there was that electric kid that worked at the hardware store who seemed kinda nice. He glanced up at the clock. Yeah, the store should still be open for a couple of hours, so if he left right now, he might be able to run into him!}

“Oh, my God! First friend! First friend!” Kaminari starts shouting and bouncing suddenly unable to keep still “I’m gonna be his first friend! Don’t fuck this up other me!”

{Izuku hopped, making Mom yelp in surprise, “I gotta go, I’ll text you if things work out!”

Mom blinked a few times, then smiled, “Alright, just don’t get home too late, I don’t want you walking around in the dark. Good luck, baby!”

Izuku grinned at her as he left, then closed the door and took a deep breath.

“Thanks,” he said softly, “I’m gonna need it.”}

“Nah, Kaminari’s too nice for that.”
“He’s a good friend.”
“Dude, you’re gonna do great.”

More words of encouragement drift through the room before the next chapter loads.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

CC:SS Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Shinso's quirk is just so fun to think about!

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Cheat Code: Support Strategist

Projection

{Hitoshi restlessly curled his toes inside his shoes as he tried not to move his head, “Are you guys actually sure this is safe?”

“Of course it is, Extra-Credit-Kun!”}

"Dramatic much?" Ururaka teases.

{He couldn’t see Hatsume and it was honestly kinda freaking him out. He knew his kidnappers wouldn’t hurt him on purpose...on accident though was another thing entirely. And wasn’t that a comforting thought to have while strapped to a brain scanner?}

"Please tell me I'm there." Recovery Girl demands.

{“Don’t worry dearie.” Recovery Girl’s voice came from the same general area as Hatsume’s. “*My* machines actually work without blowing up.”}

"That's good." Iida sighs.

{“Hey, it’s part of my creative process!”}

"They shouldn't be." Majima groans.

{“I’ll accept that when you and your classmates stop coming to

me with burns!”}

"Now *that's* just wishful thinking." Mei points out.

{“Most of them give those burns to themselves.” Hatsume insisted sullenly. “Their inventions blow up too.”}

"Not as much as yours, dearie."

{“Not as much as yours, dearie.”

None of this was actually comforting. Recovery Girl may be kind and grandmotherly, but she was honestly just as intimidating as Hatume and Midoriya were in her own way. She’d taken one look at the bags under Hitoshi’s eyes and immediately threatened to physically knock him out if he didn’t take better care of himself, all while muttering something about *almost worse than Aizawa* under her breath. It was scary.}

"Really Chiyo?" Aizawa drawls.

She raises her eyebrow at him "Are you going to argue against it?"

He huffs "I'm not an idiot."

{“Don’t pay any attention to them.” Midoriya at least could understand his predicament, considering that he was lying in a machine right next to him. “It’s gonna be fine! Recovery Girl, are we ready to start?”}

"See it's not so bad I wouldn't ask someone to do something I wasn't willing to do." Izuku grins.

"That is part of the problem." Shoto deadpans. Izuku just looks confused.

{“Yes, dearie, let me just…” there was a concerning pause, “and there! You may begin!”

“Alright, Shinso! Just ask me a question!”

“Why are you all like this?” Hitoshi deadpanned.}

"Good question." Jiro snarks.

{“Like wh...?”

Midoriya's voice sounded genuinely confused before Hitoshi took control of him and mentally ran through the commands they had discussed beforehand, "Alright. Blink twice."}

"You know before this I never thought I'd be interested in quirk experiments." Tokage comments.

"Yeah, but it's so interesting." Tsuburaba agrees.

{He couldn't see Midoriya obeying the command, but he must have because Hatsume made a very interested noise, "Oooh! Which is which?"

"This one is Shinso's and this one here is Midoriya's." Recovery Girl responded. "This is fascinating…"}

"Hey! Show us too!" Ashido demands.

{"Am I good to keep going?" Hitoshi asked.

"Yes!" Hatume yelled. "Do it!"

"Ok…" Hitoshi said hesitantly. "Um...what's your name?"

Midoriya stayed silent.}

"Obviously." Shinsou huffs.

{"Next!" Hatume ordered.

Hitoshi rolled his eyes. He didn't know why both these questions had been on the list, considering that they were the same question, "Tell me your name."

"Izuku Midoriya."}

"Um... what the fuck?" Hitoshi asks in shock.

{Hitoshi startled, sitting up and staring at Midoriya in shock, half expecting him to have somehow broken free of his control, but no. Midoriya's eyes were still glazed over and empty.}

"Show the brain scans!" Izuku begs.

{"Bink twice." Hitoshi ordered.

Midoriya blinked.

"What the fuck…" Hitoshi whispered. "I...I can't control upper brain functions! I...he shouldn't be able to answer that! I didn't tell him to say *Izuku Midoriya*, so he should have stayed silent!"}

"Straight to the existential crisis, huh?" Ururaka teases.

"What the fuck?" Shinsou whispers.

{"You ruined it!" Mei complained as she went and pinched Midoriya's arm. "You weren't supposed to move!"

Hitoshi was too shocked to respond, but Midoriya couldn't shut up as soon as he had control over his mouth again, "I was right! Recovery Girl! Did you get the pictures from that last question?"}

"What were you right about?!" Shinsou turns to Midoriya.

"I thought you wanted to wait until after all this to see my analysis?" Midoriya lifts his hands in surrender.

"Yes, but..." Shinsou growls turning back to the screen.

{"Yes, of course, I did, dearie," Recovery Girl sighed and looked sternly at Hitoshi, "Though we're lucky that you didn't move *before* those were processed. What if they'd blurred? That's why you don't move during brain scans!"}

Though not Tully there Shinsou calms a bit from the scolding.

{Hitoshi was still just trying to process everything as Midoriya went to go look at the scans, and he may as well have been the one brainwashed judging by how he obeyed when Midoriya waved him over to come to look as well. }

"Fair."
"I can see that."
"Is that what it feels like?"

{"Alright, so here are the pictures from our conversation before you activated your quirk." Midoriya pointed to the screens. "When you were talking, your brain lit up like this, and when I was talking, my brain lit up."}

"Makes sense." Himiko nods, putting a serious face.

{Midoriya nodded to Recovery Girl, who pulled up another set of brain pictures, "Now these are the ones from that last experiment.

In these two, you're giving the order, but in these, I'm responding. What do you see?"

Hitoshi looked at the pictures and frowned, "You said that these two are when you were responding?"

Midoriya nodded.

"And this is my brain," Hitoshi pointed at the screen as he talked, "and this one's yours?"

"Yep!" Midoriya smiled knowingly.

"...But why is my brain lit up when you're talking?" Hitoshi was so confused. "Are you sure you're not getting them mixed up? Shouldn't your brain be lighting up like it did when we were talking before?"}

"Mental projection, like some kindofweakhivemind. Iwonderifyoucould..." Izuku starts mumbling.

{"Exactly." Midoriya grinned. "I think the reason why it takes so much effort to maintain your quirk's connection without taking control is that your brain is actually connecting to their body. Rather than simple brainwashing, it's almost as though you literally put yourself in the driver's seat, almost like a projection of your own consciousness. I wonder if you could learn to see through their...no, not right now, we can explore that later. The big thing is that even though you didn't tell me exactly what to say, I was still able to respond because *you know my name*!"}

"How does that help?" Hagakure asks.

{Hitoshi's mind was whirling, "But...that still means that my quirk is useless for information gathering. They can only tell me things I already know."

"For now, yes." Midoriya said. "But we've already been practicing having a partial connection when you wait to activate your quirk, so now we just need to see if you can give that partial control back to the person you're brainwashing. You'll still be in control of their mouth, but they'll be able to access their own memories."

"In which case, both your brains will light up!" Hatsume added. "I wonder if there's a baby that would make that easier."}

"No brain machines!" Majima cries out.

{“I am not having any of your babies near my brain.” Hitoshi said quickly. “No. not happening.”}

"Aw." Mei wines in disappointment.

{“Oh, you’re no fun.” Hatsume pouted. “But you’re gonna need a lot of practice.”

Hitoshi nodded in determination. He’d never thought being a hero was going to take anything less.}

"Alright!"
"Wait to go!"
"That goes for all of us!"

{“So...I hear you’ve taken an interest in my problem child.” Hizashi said over dinner, looking like he wanted nothing more than to have a wide smile as he said it.}

"Shinsou isn't a problem child." Aizawa disagrees.

{“He’s not a problem child.” Shouta said stubbornly, glaring at his husband. “And if he was, he’d be Majima’s, not yours.”}

"Hey, he's in *my* class." Mic argues.

{“Just because the two students that keep kidnapping him are support-course students doesn’t erase the fact that he’s in *my* homeroom.” Hizashi paused and grinned at him. “For now…”}

"Nice to know he thinks I'll transfer." Shinsou remarks.

{“Shinso has to prove himself at the sports festival before he can join my class.” Shouta said. “If he keeps up with the determination I saw the other day, he *might* just have a chance, but only if he doesn’t think his quirk is an ace in the hole. My students aren’t stupid. They’ll figure out his quirk sooner rather than later, so relying on that alone won’t be good enough.”}

"Not if I have anything to say about it!" Izuku challenges.

{“Oh, don’t be such a spoilsport.” Hizashi threw a pea at him, which Shouta dodged. “Give the kid a chance, maybe he’ll surprise you. He *does* have two of the top support students in

their year on his side."}

"You know it!" Mei cheers.

{Shouta sighed, "That's what I'm worried about. Shinso may not be a problem child, but those two *definitely* are. What kind of first-year helps with a villain attack and makes himself a target when he doesn't have to?"}

"That's just who he is." Head case comments fondly.

{"A mini-nedzu?" Hizashi suggested helpfully.

Shouta snorted, "No. He's still nicer than the rat."}

"In this universe." Mt. Lady grumbles.

{"I'm glad you like them." Hizashi smiled. "It's been a while since you've actually taken a liking to a student."

"My job is to keep them alive." Shouta pointed out. "Not to like them."}

Snort
"Sure."
"Keep telling yourself that."

{"Still, I'm glad you're starting to take Shinso under your wing." Hizashi said, turning back to his food.

"I'm not taking…"

"You are." Hizashi cut him off. "And that's not a bad thing, Shou. You know that right?"}

"You're so stubborn Shota." Midnight scolds playfully.

{"He has potential." Shouta tried to defend himself, but his husband knew him better than that and simply gave him a mischievous smile. Oh no, he didn't like where this was going.

"You know, I know you said that our students keep us busy enough that we don't need kids of our own, but…" Hizashi said suggestively.

"We are not adopting Shinso." Shouta said firmly. "Even if we had time to adopt a child, which we don't, Shinso has parents of

his own.”}

"Not in your world apparently." Shinsou comments.

{“Actually, he doesn’t.”

That made Shouta do a double take, “What?”

“I said he doesn’t have parents of his own.” Hizashi frowned. “I didn’t ask the details, but his file says he’s currently in a foster home. So if you wanted to…”}

"No Hizashi, stop it!" Aizawa scolds.

"Make me!" Mic laughs. Joke cackles at the banter.

{“We’re not adopting him.” Shouta insisted. “He’s probably very happy where he is and there’s absolutely no reason to uproot him from a good situation to move in with two of his teachers, which would be weird enough, but then those two teachers also *work two jobs each*. Three, in your case.”}

"About that..." Shinsou starts.

{“Aww, Shou…” Hizashi whined playfully. “You *do care about him!”*

Shouta glared at him, “Nevermind. Shinso has been officially upgraded to problem child and it’s entirely your fault.”}

"Mic-Sensei how could you?" Shinsou asks sarcastically.

{“Aw, don’t be like that!” Hizashi laughed. “I mean, we could be a very happy…”

“Still not adopting him.”}

"So how long 'till Shinsou gets adopted?" Ashido posits.

"Place your bets!" Kaminari calls out.

After a cacophony of sound Aizawa manages to get the room to quiet down with a few strategic glares just as the next chapter starts.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

S:THMH Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Denki's got an objective, but can he keep it?

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Shadows: The Horror Movies Heroes

Hot Potato

{Denki's eyes widened as a hero came barrelling into the bank and grabbed both of them with tentacles that were growing like hair out of his head. He immediately started struggling against the hold, which just made the hero smile, "Hey man, that's not gonna work. I'm Ogawa...oh, sorry, I don't really have an official hero name yet. But anyway, I'm here to stop you!"}

"Oh hello, young hero." Hagakure purrs.

Ojirou rolls his eyes "I see how it is, as a villain you can't get attached but he turns up in a hero event and you practically start drooling."

"I have no idea what you're talking about." she huffs, turning away from him and pouting. Luckily her tone made it obvious she was teasing him back rather than being genuinely insulted

{"Just follow my lead, Sparky." Even though she was as trapped as he was, Mom grinned. "Eat our sparks!"}

"Your moms a little feral there." Mina comments.

"I guess." Kaminari replies.

{She electrified herself and Denki only hesitated a moment before doing the same. The hero seized and stumbled back, loosening his

tentacles just enough that Denki could wriggle his way free. Mom bolted out the door and Denki shoved the objective under his arm as he scrambled after her. It didn't take long for the hero to recover from their joint attack, not nearly as long as Denki had expected, and they only had a few seconds' head start down the street before he was chasing after them. Denki could see the other villains from earlier watching them from the surrounding rooftops and gulped as he gripped the objective a little tighter against his body. If this was what being a villain was like, why would anyone choose that? They were surrounded by enemies on every side! Who wanted to live like that?!}

"I..." Dabi starts.

"I didn't." Toga whispers.

"It's not fun." Twice agrees. *"It's been a blast!"*

Shigiraki hears each of them and isn't sure how to respond.

{One of the villains was absolutely huge and Denki caught a glimpse of him throwing himself off the roof and onto the hero. Denki didn't look back to make sure the hero was alright, though, because he was too busy worrying about the other two villains, a man and a woman, who had just dropped down to block their path. He skidded to a stop beside Mom, who was already in a fighting stance staring down their new opponents.}

"I don't recognize these ones." Amplifier comments.

"Bound to happen eventually." Rock Lock points out.

"I guess." Amplifier concedes.

{"I'd give up now if I were you, fellas." Mom smiled. "You couldn't beat me earlier, you can't beat me now."

"We weren't trying our best earlier." The woman smirked and pulled out a dull knife coated in red paint. "But now that your boy there did the work of getting the objective, it's a different story."}

"And they're gonna target me." Kaminari sighs.

"Well, they are villains." Sero reminds him

“Doesn’t mean I have to like it.” he grumbles.

{“Toss me the bag.” Mom said without looking at him. “We’ll split up and meet at the rendezvous point, got it?”

Denki nodded quickly, “Ok.”

“Go!”

He tossed her the bag, but before she could catch it, a gust of wind picked it up and carried it toward the male villain, “Got ya.”

“Oh.” Denki said quietly. “Well, that’s not good.”}

Jiro snorts “You think?”

{“Ectricity quirks, most likely related, and the ages point to a mother-son duo.” Izuku muttered under his breath. “Fairly standard strength enhancement. I wonder if it’s like FatGums and has to do with body weight. Something to do with knives and obvious wind manipulation. I wonder how far that goes…”}

“One sentence and I’m already terrified.” Kaminari comments.

“That’s fair.” Kirishima agrees.

{Hitoshi shook his head as Izuku muttered to himself. They had managed to find a nice apartment for themselves without too many neighbors and so far no one had noticed that they weren’t supposed to be there, which was good. The other villains were running around completely unaware that Izuku was tearing apart their quirks through the cameras and Hitoshi was doing his best to do the same with their personalities. The electricity quirk users would be hard to turn against each other, but he might be able to do it if he took control of one and gave just the right orders. Making them fight each other in general would also be effective emotional manipulation, so there were plenty of things he could do.}

“That is *so* much worse.” Kaminari stresses.

“You poor thing.” Ashido fake pouts.

“Just wait until they get to you.” Kaminari warns.

{The heroes had managed to arrest a couple of the minor villains

right off the bat. The ones with the grasshopper quirks had gotten away and it still remained to be seen who would end up with the bank objective and if any of those villains would actually get away. If anyone did, Hitoshi was betting on the older of the two electricity users. She seemed to have the most fighting experience out of everyone there.}

“Yeah, no shit.” Hitoshi snarks.

{Hitoshi had doubted that the heroes would actually take the objectives to the agency, but the trio who had protected the vase had immediately decided to do just that, which meant that their plan was on track. Hitoshi glanced over to Izuku and sighed. Nobody but Izuku was crazy enough to come up with that plan.}

“Are...” Iida starts “Are you planning to break into a hero agency?”

“That is what it sounds like.” Midoriya comments just as surprised as his friends.

{Jiro hadn’t taken part in the initial rush either, but that didn’t mean that she’d just been sitting around. She’d been looking for something, as far as Hitoshi could tell, and she’d been camped outside a tech store for a few minutes now looking for a mark. At least, that’s what Hitoshi assumed she was doing. She kept looking at the people passing by and almost approaching them before chickening out. She somehow still managed to keep mostly out of sight, which meant that no one had noticed her suspicious behavior, but she needed to act quickly and do whatever she was planning soon, or else she was going to get caught.}

“It appears you’re attempting to acquire some speakers.” Momo comments.

“Now if only I could pull it off.” Jiro cringes not confident in her other selves new power.

{A young man a few years older than them walked by her hiding spot and Jiro took a deep breath before strolling out of her hiding spot, carefully looking as normal as possible as she trailed after the guy. When he was almost at the store, he suddenly went rigid before relaxing and Hitoshi leaned forward to get a closer look at the screen. It was hard to see, but it almost looked like Jiro had stabbed one of her earphone jacks into his hand, but he couldn’t be sure because it wasn’t a second later that they started moving, him walking right beside her the whole way.}

“Looks like she’s refining her control.” Shinsou comments leaning forward “Or at least she’s trying to.

{“Hey, Izuku, can you get me any visuals inside the electronics store?” Hitoshi asked. “I think Jiro’s making a move.”

“Uh, sure.” Izuku absently pulled up the cameras and went back to watching the other villain fights. “Tell me if she does anything interesting.”}

“She’s doing something interesting.” Shinsou says, grinning at the deadpan look it earns him.

{Hitoshi nodded and watched as Jiro walked with her victim through the store, picking up some high-end speakers before whispering something to the guy and walking up to the counter. She didn’t have to say another word. The guy flashed his token and paid for the speakers and Hitoshi’s jaw dropped as he realized that she was somehow controlling him *through* her earphone jacks.

“Hey, Izuku, I think you’re going to want to see this.” He pointed to Jiro, who was simply walking out of the store with her victim like nothing was out of the ordinary. “I’m not the only brainwasher here.”

“Really?” Izuku watched for a moment and then started muttering again. “This is perfect, if we can convince the police and heroes that she’s committing your crimes then we won’t have to be as careful, not that we won’t be careful in the first place, obviously, but it’ll give us some leeway…”}

“Hey!” Jiro complained.

{He trailed off and started scribbling in his notebook. Hitoshi kept watching as Jiro got partially down the street and then yanked the speakers out of the guy's hand and started booking it as her victim screamed. He winced.}

“Amateur.” Shigaraki grumbled.

{“Um, by the way.” Hitoshi grimaced. “She might need a little more quirk training.”}

Snort
“Really?”

”No.”

{The guy with the wind quirk smirked at them as he tossed the objective up and down. He was too far away for Denki to hit with his electricity, but it looked like Mom had it covered. She ran forward, hands already sparking until the woman with the knives *threw one at her face*. She managed to dodge, barely but had to turn to fight the woman instead of the stupid guy who was now running away with the objective. Denki looked back toward the hero, who was still fighting that big guy and swore. It looked like it was up to him. He bolted after the wind quirk user, who suddenly stopped when he ran into a crowd of people. Denki didn’t have time to stop before barreling into him. It took him a split second to think to activate his quirk, which gave the wind guy an opening to throw the bag over to the big guy, who caught it. The hero, though, responded by wrapping him up in his tentacles and he had to wriggle out of them to toss the objective again.}

“Really putting that chapter title to good use.” Mic jokes.

“That was awful.” Aizawa deadpans.

“Sure.” Mic grins cheekily.

{Mom shoved the knife lady to the ground and jumped to catch it, then threw it to Denki, “Run Sparky!”}

“Book it!”
“Listen to her!”
“Ruuuuun!”

{Denki almost fumbled the bag, but managed to catch it just barely and ran as fast as he could. He skidded around the corner and grinned. He’d done it! He’d gotten away!}

“Don’t stop!”
”you’re not out of the woods yet!”
“Don’t celebrate too soon!”

{There was a burning pain in his lungs and Denki stumbled to a stop, completely unable to breathe. What? What was happening? Was he dying? Was this a medical emergency? Had he punctured a lung? He collapsed onto the ground, dropping the objective as his fingers lost the strength to grip it. What was going on?!}

“The wind user!” Midoriya hissed.

{“That was a pretty good shock there, Sparky.” A voice said and Denki tried gasping for air as the wind guy knelt in front of him and grabbed the objective. “Too bad my quirk is Air Control, huh? It works on the air in people’s lungs too, as I'm sure you already figured out. I’ll let you breathe in a minute, but, uh, I’ll be keeping *this* for safekeeping, ok?”}

“Leave before you kill the child!” Recovery Girl scolded.

{He winked and disappeared into the darkness at the end of the alley. Denki had no idea if the time after was *actually* a minute, but if it was, it felt like the longest minute of his life. His vision was starting to go dark before he felt air flooding back into his lungs again. He coughed and gulped, desperately trying to get enough oxygen. At some point, he felt a hand rubbing his back and his mom’s voice trying to calm him down, but it was kind of hazy.}

“That was terrifying.” Kaminari grumbles.

Bakugo rolls his eyes. “It’s just a school exercise.”

Kaminari snaps at him a bit “So was the battle trials, USJ, and sports festival, and people still got seriously hurt.”

“Yeah man, I mean it was mostly Midoriya but…” Kirishima trailed off. “Wow, Midoriya has gotten a serious injury during every major school event we’ve had hasn’t he.”

“Damn, when you put it like that…” Sero can’t quite find the words.

{After he finally managed to get his breathing under control again, he looked up to see Mom looking at him in concern, “Are you ok, Sparky?”

“Uh, I’ll get back to you on that.” Denki rasped. “Wind guy got away.”

Mom nodded, “So did the lady with the knives. The big guy got caught by the hero though. Let’s hurry and get away while he’s still busy with the arrest.”}

“Smart lady.” Toga chirps.

{Denki nodded and shakily got to his feet. Why would anyone want to be a villain?}

This time the villains kept quiet waiting silently for the next chapter to begin while the others refilled their food and drink for the next round.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

D?ITHSP... Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

The conclusion of the USJ incident.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Deku? I Think He's Some Pro...

Powerful

{Izuku stared at the hand villain in shock and fear. A side quest? What did that even mean? How did this guy even know who he was?}

“Of course, info on Deku leaked to the villain’s side.” Eraserhead growled.

“He helped too many to keep himself a secret.” Mic sighed.

{”I guess I haven’t introduced myself, have I?” The hand villain sauntered closer, “You’re supposed to do that for non-NPC characters. My name is Tomura Shigaraki. You’re pretty famous, Deku, did you know that? All sorts of people are in prison because of you.”}

“Not the best start if you’re trying to recruit him.” Compress criticizes.

“What do you mean?” Tomura scratches at his neck.

“That kinda sounded like a threat.” Spinner points out.

Shigaraki blinks, scratches up his nose, and turned back to the screen “Didn’t stop the lot of you.”

{Izuku swallowed hard and looked to where Eraser was lying

broken on the ground, still underneath the Nomu. He didn't know if backup was coming, but there was a good chance All Might was on his way by this point. If Izuku could stall the villains, even temporarily, he might be able to keep them from hurting Eraser even more.}

"I'd prefer you get to safety." Aizawa comments.

"I doubt he could stomach leaving you like that." Midnight mentions.

"I know I wouldn't." Mic agrees.

{He gave Shigaraki a shaky smile and stepped up into the plaza, "Yep, that's me."}

"I hope my other self catches on to you stalling, kero." Tsu comments.

"Me too." Izuku agrees.

{Shigaraki grinned, "Sensei says you're pretty smart."

"That's what they keep telling me." Izuku shrugged. "But I really don't think I'm anything special."

Shigaraki scratched at his neck, "That's not what Sensei says…" he growled.}

"Really boss?" Dabi deadpans.

"You seem to be doing better." Compress comments

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Dabi denies.

Compress just hums disapprovingly.

{Izuku froze. Downplaying his intelligence was obviously stressing Shigaraki out, which might make him more likely to attack, "Umm…I mean, I don't actually know my IQ, so I can't tell you objectively that I'm actually smarter than anyone else, but if I wasn't, I probably wouldn't be at UA so…."}

"Smooth." Shinsou teases.

"What do you want from me?" Izuku wines.

{Shigaraki stopped scratching and smiled, "Yeah, that's what Sensi said. Sensei's even smarter than you are, Deku…"}

“At least it worked?” Iida questions.

{The mist villain appeared next to Shigaraki, “My apologies, but despite my best efforts, a student escaped. The heroes are no doubt on their way.”}

“More distractions!” Toga complains. “Can we get back to the fighting?”

{Shigaraki scratched violently at his neck, “Kurogiri, you idiot! If you weren’t our warp gate, I’d kill you right now.”}

“What wonderful loyalty.” Dabi drawls.

“What was that?” Shigaraki growls.

Dabi goes to snap back when Compress interrupts “He said he’s going to pick fights with anyone and everyone he can just to avoid thinking about himself.”

“Hey!” Dabi rounds on Compress.

The man just raises an eyebrow “Am I wrong?”

“Yes!” Dabi snaps.

“If you say so.” Compress dismisses.

{Izuku tried to calm his breathing and keep his hope in check. Heroes were on the way, but that didn’t mean they were out of the woods yet. His best bet was to keep stalling Shigaraki and keep him from doing anything too violent until All Might arrived.

“Maybe we should kill…”

“Shigaraki.” Izuku said loudly. “You said something about a quest for me. I’m sure your sensei wouldn’t be too happy if you didn’t let me know about it.”}

“If he didn’t say that…” Mineta shivers.

{“Ahh, yes!” Shigaraki turned to look at him again. “Sensei is so excited to meet you!”

“Who is your Sensei?” Keep him talking….

Shigaraki pointed at the Nomu, “I’m sure you’ve noticed my

Nomu isn't exactly *normal*, right?"}

"You could say that." Izuku snarks nervously.

{Izuku nodded, keep him talking, "I've noticed he's pretty powerful, and that he seems to obey your orders."

Shigaraki nodded, "He *is* pretty powerful, but Sensei makes him seem like a mid-level boss!" He cackled. "Nomu here has multiple quirks. He's got regeneration, shock absorption, not to mention super strength. The quirks mess with his brain a bit but," he shrugged, "what can you do?"}

""What can you do?" does he not realize how horrifying what he just said was?" Monoma remarks incredulously.

"How long has he lived with villains to think like that?" Kendo questions.

{Izuku's mind spun, he wanted to say it was impossible for someone to have that many quirks, but...Toogata had two quirks, didn't he? If there was a quirk that could be passed down like All Might's, was it possible that there was a quirk that could bestow multiple quirks? Oh, dang, he was probably supposed to respond, wasn't he?}

"The *one time* his mumbling *doesn't* kick in." Bakugo shakes his head.

{"Umm… how did Nomu get all these quirks?" Izuku did his best to look intrigued, "I'm assuming he wasn't born with them?"

"Nope!" Shigaraki grinned. "That's my Sensei's quirk! He can take quirks from whoever he wants and give them to his loyal followers. That's where you come in, Deku."}

"Oh no."
"Oh no."
"Oh no."

{Izuku felt slightly nauseous, he hoped he was wrong about where this was going, "Me?"

Shigaraki nodded, "Sensei promised that if you come with us and use that big brain of yours to help the league, he'll give you a quirk. Wouldn't it be nice to not be quirkless anymore?"}

“Oh, God.” Izuku swallows nervously “there’s worlds where I’ve done that.”

Headcase winces “Is it better or worse that most of the time it isn’t consensual and usually backfires?”

Izuku pauses a moment “I have no idea.”

{“Shut up!” Tsu shouted from behind him. “He’s a villain, Midoriya, you can’t believe a word he says.”}

“I know that now get away!” Izuku cries out.

{Izuku cursed and tried to wave her away. Why were they still there? He had to keep control of the situation. Izuku glanced toward the door. Just keep Shigaraki occupied a little longer, “What kind of quirk are we talking about? I don’t think I’d need an intelligence quirk. Like you mentioned, that’s already in my arsenal. And I’m a decent quirkless fighter. What quirk could Sensei have that could tempt me?”}

“I don’t think Tsu is going to leave.” Ochako worries.

{Shigaraki shrugged, “Any quirk you want. Sensei’s got a lot of options, but I bet that even if you pointed out a random quirk off the street, Sensei would be happy to steal it for you.”}

“I might throw up.” Kaminari mentions. Ashido silently hands him a barf bag.

{“Don’t listen to him!” Mineta screamed. “What he’s saying is impossible, everyone knows that!”}

”Shut up, Mineta!”

{Shigaraki scowled and started scratching at his neck again and Izuku wished his classmates would stop trying to help, “No, he's not lying." He looked Shigaraki in the eye, "I know that it’s possible.”}

“That’s a dangerous thing to say.” Gran scoffs.

{Shigaraki smiled, “Then you accept?”}

“Fuck no.” Izuku replies immediately.

{Izuku took a deep breath and hesitated. He could keep playing

along and say yes, but he didn't think it was smart to let the villains think they'd won him over. They might try to kidnap him or even seek him out after this if they thought he was interested in joining up. But All Might was on his way so Izuku wouldn't have to deal with Shigaraki's wrath for too long. Hopefully.}

"Shame." Shigaraki remarks " I wonder if that glowing lady will let us see some of those worlds where golden child got a quirk from sensei."

{"No." he said finally, "I've gotten this far quirkless, and I don't think I want a quirk anymore." Izuku clenched his fists. "I don't need to be powerful to be useful, Shigaraki!"}

"What he said!"
"Tell him!"
"Damn straight!"

{Shigaraki's face twisted in rage and he screamed as he ran at Izuku, who rolled to the side just in time, but Shigaraki was already attacking again. Izuku grabbed a handful of dirt and threw it in Shigaraki's face, scrambling to his feet and grabbing a knife as Shigaraki growled and rubbed his eyes.}

Ururaka grips Midoriya's hands as she watches another encounter with the man that laid his hand on her friend's neck the last time she'd seen him in person before the theater.

{"You little brat!" The sand didn't distract him for as long as Izuku hoped, but this time when Shigaraki ran at him, he was prepared. He gripped his knife a little harder in preparation for what he was planning and ignored the little voice in his head that screamed he was going too far, that there had to be another way. But Izuku didn't know what else to do. He was outmatched, his opponent was faster and stronger than he was, and five-point disintegration quirks needed five points to work.}

"Oh, shit!" Dabi exclaims the first to clue into the plan besides the boy himself who can only bring himself to stare at the screen.

{As soon as Shigaraki reached for him, Izuku pivoted and swung his knife, flinching at the blood as he sliced through the muscle and bone of Shigaraki's left pinky. Izuku almost threw up when he saw that the finger was still hanging on by only a small piece of skin and muscle. He'd done that. He'd hurt him, and likely caused permanent damage just to disable a quirk.}

“I didn’t see that coming.” Shinsou remarks “Probably should have but still.”

“That was necessary! I don’t want to hear anything about that being too far!” Eraserhead demands.

{Shigaraki screamed in rage and pain, reaching for Izuku and grabbing his forearm with his uninjured hand. Izuku gasped at the pain as his skin and muscle slowly flaked away. He tried to yank his arm away from Shigaraki’s tight grasp but was unable to until Shigaraki was distracted by a loud bang.

“I am here, to save you!”}

“Thank fuck!”
“Finally!”
“It’s about time!”
“Took you long enough!”

{There was a rush of wind and Izuku found himself standing outside the USJ with All Might looking down on him with concern, “Are you alright, my boy?”}

“Go help the others!” Midoriya shrieks.

{Izuku nodded, “I’m injured, but fine, go fight the villains, but beware of the Nomu, he’s got multiple quirks.”

All Might frowned, “You’re injured, maybe I should…”}

“Hello! Two useless arms left alone with the main villains here!” Eraser scolds.

{Izuku grits his teeth, “I’ll be fine, but the other students are in danger. Save them!”}

“Yeah, do that please.” Mineta cries out.

{“But you…”}

”Go!”

{Izuku hit All Might’s chest with his uninjured arm, “They are here to kill *you*, All Might, which you would know if you didn’t waste all your time this morning when you were supposed to teach today. Go save the others, they need you just as much as I do.”}

“Listen to him!” Yagi yells at his other self.

{All Might’s face hardened, “The others can take care of themselves.”}

“No!”
“Bullshit!”
“We cannot!”
“It’s the first fucking week!”
“Pull your head out of your ass!”

{“No they can’t!" Izuku screamed, "They’re students, All Might! Now stop wasting what little time you have left and get in there! Leave me and go!”}

“For the love of...” Yagi buries his head in his hands.

{All Might hesitate another long moment before disappearing back into the facility. Izuku scowled and made his way back into the USJ. He needed to make sure Eraser and the other students were safe.}

“At least someone has the right priorities.” Recovery Girl sighs.

{Ashido and Uraraka were trying to patch up Thirteen when he saw them, and he ran to help Asui and Mineta, who were struggling to carry Aizawa up the stairs as All Might traded blows with the Nomu. They laid him next to Thirteen and Izuku could feel tears welling up as he took in his injured friend.}

“He’s too young for this kind of situation.” Eraser grits his teeth and grips his armrest with his full strength.

{“Midoriya?” Asui put her hand on his shoulder. “Are you alright?”

Izuku nodded, “I can hardly feel the pain right now, but we need to find the others and get out of here. Hopefully, All Might can handle the villains.”}

“Focus on what you can do.” Nedzu agrees.

{“Umm…” Mineta pointed a shaky finger down at the plaza. “I don’t know if he can.”}

Iida sighs “You’re about to jump in aren’t you?”

“Probably.” Izuku agrees.

{Izuku looked to see All Might bleeding from his side and slowly being pulled through a portal after he’d apparently tried to supplex the Nomu. Izuku grimaced and started running back down to the plaza as the others yelled for him to stop. Hopefully, Aizawa would forgive him, but the world couldn’t lose its symbol of peace yet!}

“Controversial opinion.” Mei warns “We wouldn’t be having the “society on the brink of collapse” problem if it weren’t for relying on the Symbol of Peace.”

“Or at least if we didn’t forget he was and is human at some point.” Todoroki of all people agrees.

Izuku can’t bring himself to respond.

{There was an explosion right as he reached the plaza and Izuku stopped as he saw Katsuki pin Kurogiri and Todoroki freeze half the Nomu, allowing All Might to escape as Kirishima ran at Shigaraki, who was still cradling his injured hand, “Kids these days really are amazing. Can’t have that. Nomu!”}

“Practically missing a finger and still quipping.” Twice praises *”Is this really the time!”*

{The Nomu pulled itself back through the warp gate and tore off its frozen limbs, regrowing them in seconds. Izuku nodded, if he’d created something with multiple quirks, regeneration would definitely be one of them. The others, though, were shocked.

“What is this?” All Might was still clutching his side. “I thought you said his quirk was shock absorption?”}

Izuku summoned his writing desk just so he could smack his forehead on it.

{Izuku scowled. He’d warned him that Nomu had multiple quirks. Had All Might even listened to him?}

“Apparently not.” Yagi groans.

{“Nomu’s been engineered to take you on even at 100% of your power.” Shigaraki said, gritting his teeth through the pain. “He’s basically a highly efficient punching bag that hits back! First

things first, though, we need to free our method of escape. Nomu, get him!"

Izuku gasped as the Nomu ran for Katsuki and a massive cloud of dust billowed from the impact, "Katsuki!"

"I'm right here you idiot!" Katsuki was sitting beside Kirishima dusty and bruised from being tossed, but ok.}

Ashido rolls up her notebook and smacks Bakugo on the head with it "A bioengineered superweapon just charged you at full speed why the fuck are you pissed someone is concerned for you!?"

"I don't fucking know any more!" Katsuki snaps back.

Mina stops and looks at him as seriously as she could before grinning "That's better than the start of the year."

Bakugo rolls his eyes hiding a smile as he turns back to the screen.

{"But then…?" Kirishima looked over toward the Nomu, "How'd you get over here?"

"Isn't it obvious?" Todoroki pointed to where the dust was clearing to reveal All Might, his arms still raised to block the punch.}

"When you put it like that..." Kirishima grumbles playfully.

{"These are kids and you didn't hold back?" Blood was starting to leak from the corner of All Might's mouth.}

"I thought I was seeing things back then." Todoroki comments.

"I swear half the reason it took so long for All Might's small form to be public was denial." Izuku sighs.

{"He was pinning my warp gate, so it's not like I had much choice." Shigaraki said. "And besides, these kids are no angels." He held up his mangled hand. "That one even tried to cut my hand apart. What kind of hero does something like that?"}

"One that cares more about lives than clout!" Rock Lock growls.

{Katsuki looked at Izuku incredulously and he grimaced. Yeah, it really did sound bad when Shigaraki put it like *that.*}

“What other way could you put it?” Shigaraki teases maliciously.

“Be happy it was just a finger this time.” Headcase comments off-handedly. Dabi snorts as Toga giggles. The rest of the room had various reactions as the young villain grumbled about heroes and excessive force.

{All Might cut off Shigaraki’s monologue about heroic violence, “I think you’re just doing whatever you want and trying to hide it behind values.”

Shigaraki chuckled, “You figured me out, huh? Nomu! Kill him!”}

“Wow.” Spinner deadpans a little disappointed.

{Dust filled the plaza as Nomu and All Might started fighting, “If he’s designed to defeat me at 100%,” All Might gritted his teeth, “then I’ll just have to go beyond that! Plus Ultra!”}

“Eh, I’m not feeling it.” Hagakure comments.

“Gee, I wonder why?” Jiro remarks sarcastically.

{He sent the Nomu flying through the ceiling, then turned to Shigaraki, “I guess I really am getting weaker, that took more than 300 punches!”}

“Don’t say that you idiot!” Gran scolds.

{Shigaraki was scratching at his neck with his good hand, “Cheater! How did he beat Nomu?”}

“How is that cheating?” Mei asks.

“It’s not he’s just a sore loser.” Izuku remarks.

{“What, villain?” All Might looked as powerful as ever, but Izuku could see steam mixed in with the dust. He was out of time. “I thought you were going to kill me?”}

“Bluffing doesn’t look good on you Toshinori.” Tsukauchi sighs.

“Didn’t have much of a choice.” Yagi defends weakly.

{Shigaraki screamed and threw himself at All Might and Izuku knew this was how it was going to end. All Might probably couldn’t move or he’d reveal his true form, and he was probably

willing to die to keep that secret, considering how long he'd kept being a hero despite his condition. But if the symbol of peace were to be killed here by villains, crime would skyrocket all over Japan. The world couldn't lose its symbol like this!}

"I imagine you had a slightly nicer thought process in our world." Shinsou remarks.

"A bit more personal too." Izuku agrees.

{Izuku cursed and started running. All Might might not reveal his true form to save himself, but he would to save someone else. And who better than the kid he already thought was weak and defenseless?}

"Oh, that's underhanded." Dabi comments a little impressed "Hero route might be growing on me."

"Did you just call it a *route*?" Spinner asks.

Dabi scowls "The boss is infecting me." he claims earning laughter from his teammates.

{"Midoriya, no!" All Might grabbed him and rolled to the side in a puff of steam as Izuku ran into Shigaraki's line of fire. All of a sudden, gunfire rang out and Shigaraki screamed again. Izuku looked to see him disappear into a warp gate right before his view was obscured by one of Cementoss's walls.}

"Well, that was nerve-wracking." Ochaco comments.

"Yeah." Izuku sighs exhausted.

"Just four more and we can sleep." Shinsou reminds them.

"Wonderful." Iida groans.

{All Might glared at him as the steam of his transformation finally cleared, "That was incredibly reckless, young Midoriya."

Izuku met his eyes, "So was letting yourself die just to keep a secret."

All Might's face softened, "I'm just glad you're alright." He put his hand on Izuku's shoulder, "After today, young Midoriya, I hope you've seen how reckless it is for you to be a hero. There's no shame in dropping out of the hero course now that you've seen

what real villains are like."}

"Oh, fuck *you*!"
"Fuck off!"
"Just stop!"
"For the love of..."
"Shut up!"

{Izuku knocked All Might's hand away and his eyes hardened. Up until this point, Izuku figured he'd kinda been in the denial stage of grief, mourning the loss of the hero he'd grown up admiring. But he'd forgotten that anger was a stage of grief too, and that's all Izuku felt as he looked at a hero who would crush his dream, even after he'd saved his life. Good thing Izuku had new heroes now.}

"Bought time." Eraser grumbles.

{Izuku stood and started stalking back toward the entrance before stopping and looking back at All Might, who was still standing there, pleading with his eyes for Izuku to just give up and stay safe.}

"I really want to smack him." Brave growls.

{"I already knew what real villains were like, All Might," he said lowly, "but you'd know that if you'd ever bothered to get to know me, rather than deciding I'm weak just because I'm quirkless."}

"Amen!"
"Tell him!"
"Preach!"

{Toshinori watched Midoriya's back as he walked away. What had the boy meant when he said he already knew what villains were like? How had he remained so calm when other students were panicking? Had Midoriya really been the one to cut off Shigaraki's finger? He couldn't have. He was quirkless, right? Helpless, just like Toshinori had been before Nana gave him her quirk?}

"Excuse me!?" Eraser asks with an unnatural level of calm.

{Or was he?}

"You projecting motherfucker." Eraser turns toward Yagi.

“I know.” Yagi says.

“Do you?” Eraser demands.

“After Midoriya learned of my past quirklessness we had a very long discussion about it. And that’s all I’ll say about it without his permission.

Eraser frowns “Fine.”

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

MM:SFH Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of Freezerburn's debut.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Mastermind: Strategist For Hire

Reactions

{Ashido slammed the doors open and ran into the common room.}

Iida sighs.

{“Ashido!” Iida jumped up from his place on the couch, “Please be respectful of school property.”

“Have you seen the news?” She leaned down with her hands on her knees as she caught her breath.

“Does it fucking *look* like we’re watching the news, Pinky?” Bakugo rolled his eyes.}

“Dude, we all have cell phones.” Sero points out.

{“Turn it on! Channel 5!”

Kirishima ignored Iida’s protests that they should be doing homework instead of watching TV as he grabbed the remote and switched channels.}

“Thank you!” Ashido exclaims.

{“...won’t be…how did you put it? Ah, that’s right, coming home

anytime soon. In fact, I don't intend to come home at all." A chill went through the room and even Iida shut up as they watched Todoroki stare down Endeavor, a member of the League of Villains by his side. "I go by Freezerburn now."}

"Oh, this is gonna be rough." Mic comments.

{"He can't be implying…" Yaoyorozu glanced toward the others, who were all staring at the TV with horrified disbelief. A short scream from Ururaka drew her gaze back to the TV, where Todoroki and Dabi had released fire on Endeavor.}

"Reacting to reacting while being watched reacting by the multiverse, *joy*." Kaminari stresses.

{"No!" Kirishima shook his head. "It's gotta be a body double or...or they're threatening him or something. Todoroki wouldn't turn villain, he just wouldn't!"}

"I appreciate the confidence." Todoroki deadpans.

{"How do you know, ribbit?" Asui said. "None of us were very close to him and he never really showed a lot of emotion, so he could have been considering this for months and we wouldn't have known."}

"True." Todoroki says before Tsu can apologize

{"As much as I hate to agree," Shinso drawled, "Tsu's right. None of us know him well enough to know if this is real or not."}

"That's fair." Todoroki comments.

"Bets on how many times he'll need to stop someone from apologizing." Shinsou suggests.

{"Well," Ururaka frowned and clenched her fists at her sides, "shouldn't we be giving him the benefit of the doubt? I choose to believe he's being forced and this is all just an act! As soon as the other heroes show up, they'll save him!"}

"Oh, honey." Ururaka says toward her other self.

{"Come on, Ururaka!" Kaminari gestured wildly to the TV, where high walls of flame were keeping the reporters in place. "He's holding people hostage! What kind of a hero does that?"}

“A desperate one.” Twice says *“Don’t think they’re above that shit!”*

{“...as a hero? Or my future as your masterpiece? Either way, it’s no great loss…”

“Apparently a hero who doesn’t see himself as one.” Shinso said.}

“You can stop now.” Shinsou comments.

{The class listened as Todoroki described the abuse he’d suffered and they felt their hearts sink. It did sound like a realistic motivation if Todoroki really had decided to become a villain.}

“If?” Dabi asks.

{“That can’t be true.” Kirishima said. “He’s gotta be lying. I know Endeavor isn’t the nicest guy, but child abuse just isn’t manly.”}

“And yet.” Mirko growls toward Endeavor.

{They all waited for Endeavor to deny that he had beat Todoroki and the mood in the room crumpled when he didn’t even bother. Ururaka burst into tears while Asui and Yaoyorozu hugged her. Bakugo’s hands started popping with tiny explosions as he yelled at the television set and Kaminari accidentally shorted himself out.}

”Suffer.” Shigaraki grins.

{“The other heroes should be showing up soon, right?” Jiro asked hesitantly.

“Well, yeah.” Sato said. “But will they be able to do anything? They’ve taken over a hundred hostages.”

“Is that why Endeavor isn’t fighting back?” Sero asked. “Normally he’d have barbequed Dabi by now.”

“He probably doesn’t want to hurt Todoroki.”

“Doesn’t sound like that’s stopped him in the past.” Shinso grumbled.}

“Shinsou!” Iida scolds.

“Just because dark humor isn’t *your* coping mechanism doesn’t mean I can’t use it.” Shinsou argues defensively.

“Not the time!” Mei pushes the two away from each other.

{Todoroki ran at Endeavor, trying to catch him in ice, while Dabi came in with a sneak attack from behind.

“He’s…” Ashido couldn’t tear her eyes away from the TV.

“Acting like a villain.” Bakugo finished.}

“No shit?” Dabi snarks.

{The room exploded in yells when Dabi and Todoroki turned their fire on the hostages and some of the students jumped to their feet as though they thought they could do anything to stop the fight. The footage erupted into chaos as the cameramen and reporters were injured and some of the cameras stopped working due to the heat.}

“I hate this.” Midnight growls.

{“Fucking change the channel!” Bakugo yelled. “One of these stations has gotta have a working camera!”}

“Part of me wants them to stop watching this.” Thirteen comments.

{It took a minute of channel surfing until they managed to find another station. This one had obviously not been at the press conference but had shown up for the fight, because they were standing outside the police line as flames raged in the background and an entire fleet of ambulances drove by.}

“Figured it’d be a mass casualty event.” Recovery Girl remarks sadly.

{“There do not appear to be any fatal injuries at this time, although from what we are seeing almost everyone present was injured. The villains responsible for this attack are Dabi, a known member of the League of Villains, as well as Shouto Todoroki, who was going by the name of Freezer Burn. Until recently, Todoroki was assumed missing after he was kidnapped by the League of Villains at a UA training camp over the summer. All previous attempts to rescue him have ended in failure and well, now I guess we know why.” The reporter held a hand to her earpiece for a moment, then nodded. “Dabi and Freezerburn fled the scene shortly after opening fire on the hostages. The number one hero, Endeavor, is currently in pursuit. We’ll take you now to our chopper for a bird’s eye view.”}

“It’s still weird to hear him being called the number one, kero.” Tsu comments.

“Forever number two.” Ochaco agrees.

Izuku snorts “You can say that again.”

{“Well, we currently have eyes on a building that Endeavor chased the villains into just a few minutes ago. It appears that the fight is taking place inside…oh my god…”

A massive jet of flame erupted from the side of the building and Endeavor jumped down onto street level. The camera zoomed in on Todoroki and Dabi, who were both crouched down the street, looking a little worse for wear. They stood up slowly and stared down Endeavor and the students held their breath as they saw Todoroki frost over his left side.}

“Here it comes.” Hagakure emotionally braced herself.

{“They’ve gotta give up, now, right?” Kirishima asked. “I mean they’re facing Endeavor, they can’t win!”}

“Oh, man.” Kirishima groaned.

{Endeavor shot a fireball at Todoroki who blocked it with an ice wall and created an opening for Dabi to attack Endeavor. The students gasped when the attack not only landed but appeared to hurt Endeavor.}

“Thank All Might he’s not a villain in our world.” Momo suggests.

“Literally.” Jiro agrees.

{“I hate to say this,” the reporter in the helicopter said, “but it looks like Endeavor might need a little help with this one. Where are the other heroes? Are they all still on the rescue?”}

“Or they thought he could handle it and now it’s too late.” Todoroki remarks.

{“That’s what we’re all wondering.” Shinso said. “That’s probably why they attacked the reporters in the first place.”

“Oh! Oh my god!” The reporter couldn’t even bring herself to give any commentary as Todoroki slammed his right foot down and shot knives of ice at Endeavor, who couldn’t dodge fast enough.

The dorm room went silent, the only sound the reporter's frantic muttering at the scene below her.}

Silence once again overtook the theatre, the villains' chattering blocked off by another soundproof barrier.

{At first, Endeavor was burning hot enough that the ice melted, but after a few seconds, the ice stuck and from the angle, the helicopter was recording at, they could clearly see the massive icicles going in his chest and coming out his back coated in blood. Todoroki stood still for a long moment after Endeavor went limp and the class wondered what he was going to do? Would he regret it? Would he turn himself in? Would he just disappear?}

"If only." Mina whispered.

{On the screen Todoroki threw back his head and *laughed.* He was surrounded by ice, fire, and blood, standing in front of the person he had just killed, and *he laughed.* The class sat frozen as Dabi joined in his laughter and pulled him through a familiar purple portal just moments before the heroes arrived at the scene. They looked at each other as the horror and realization of what had just happened set in.

That was the first time they'd seen him laugh.}

Suddenly Dabi found himself in a strange mood. Facing the fact that he had thought his brother had a perfect life. It took being kidnapped by an otherworldly woman to see how wrong he was. What about Fiyumi and Natsuo? He's having a very hard time thinking of why he hated them.

{Tsukauchi straightened his tie and let out a long exhale as he sat down across from a reporter from the most popular newspaper in Japan. Normally in a situation like this, he'd hold a press conference, but well… Many of the nation's top reporters were still in the hospital being treated after yesterday's attack and the rest were understandably nervous about being targeted, so a private interview it was.}

"On the one hand, this is awful," Tsukauchi says. "On the other, less harassment from the press." Toshinori pats him on the back.

{"Hello, Detective Tsukauchi." The reporter was a pretty woman with blue skin, lavender hair, and perfectly straight teeth that

looked vaguely threatening from Tsukauchi's spot in the hot seat. "My name is Chitose Kizuki. Thank you for having me today."}

"Even a smile, pleasant as it may be, can be a weapon if one only knows how to use it." Tokoyami rumbles.

"Deep." Dark Shadow nods along.

{Tsukauchi nodded, "Thank you for coming. I understand the media's hesitance to attend a press conference considering the situation."

"You mean how the reporters on the scene were viciously targeted by Dabi and Freezerburn during yesterday's attack?" She laughed. "It's an occupational hazard. If you're chasing the biggest stories, you're always going to be the biggest target. We all knew that when we signed on!"}

"Bullshit." Bakugo scoffs.

{Tsukauchi was slightly taken aback by her slightly laissez-faire attitude toward the injury of her colleagues, many of whom were undoubtedly her friends as well as rivals, but nothing she said registered as a lie, so she at least was honest about her attitudes?}

"Small mercies?" Toshinori suggests.

{"All right, so let's begin!" Kizuki leaned forward eagerly. "So, there were a few *juicy* revelations yesterday, weren't there? What do you have to say on the subject of Dabi's identity?"}

Tsukauchi groans as Dabi chuckles.

{"We are unable to confirm or deny Dabi's claims of being a Todoroki at this time." Tsukauchi replied calmly. "Endeavor did have a son named Touya Todoroki who was reported missing about five years ago. Touya did have a fire quirk similar to Dabi's cremation as well as similar eye color, but his scars make facial recognition impossible. So, there is a possibility Dabi really is Endeavor's oldest son, but there is no way to know for certain until we can obtain a sample of Dabi's DNA."}

"Hold on just let me spit on somebody next time." Dabi snarks.

"Ew." Toga whines.

“I do *not* want to hear that from *you*.” Dabi hisses.

Toga giggles.

{“But don’t you have a lie detection quirk?” Kizuki asked with a gleam in her eye. “Surely you can tell if he was telling the truth from the footage.”

“Normally, that would be the case.” Tsukauchi nodded. “His words registered as true according to my quirk, but there is always the possibility that he is delusional and simply believes that he is Touya Todoroki, in which case he wouldn’t be lying, at least from his own perspective. Therefore we are waiting on genetic testing before we can confidently confirm Dabi’s identity.”}

Midoriya frantically takes notes ”He could verify an insanity defense so easily...”

{Kizuki nodded, satisfied, “Alright, next question. Both Dabi and Freezerburn accused Endeavor of abusing them as children, including accusations of him participating in a quirk marriage. Did Endeavor abuse his family?”}

“And there’s the million-dollar question.” Aizawa sighs.

{Tsukauchi sighed heavily, “Unfortunately, according to the evidence we have gathered in the past 24 hours, those accusations do appear to be accurate. We are still in the process of taking official statements from Endeavor’s two remaining children as well as his wife, but the evidence as well as my quirk indicate the Dabi and Freezerburn were telling the truth.”}

“No shit?” Dabi asks sarcastically while most of the League snickers.

{He didn’t want to give those details to the media. Already there was a huge public outcry against the hero commission and the hero system at large even without confirmation of Endeavor’s abuse, but the fallout would be so much worse if they tried to cover it up and it got out anyway. Tsukauchi knew that there would be inevitable changes in the hero system as a result of Endeavor’s abuse and Todoroki’s turn to villainy, but hopefully, they would be able to do enough damage control in the next few months that they could curb the worst of it.}

“Why do I suddenly feel jinxed?” Tsukauchi asks.

“Because you’ve been paying attention.” Torino remarks.

{Kizuku was smiling slightly and he could see the hunger in her eyes, “So I guess here’s the million-dollar question: how did a child abuser get to be the number one hero?”}

“Corruption.”
“Money.”
“Sabotage.”
“Nepotism?”
“Intimidation.”

{“We are currently running internal investigations of both the police force and the hero commission to find the answer to that question.” Tsukauchi said. “That being said, it appears to have been a mixture of bribery and people’s willingness to turn a blind eye out of the belief that Endeavor could not be guilty of crimes simply because he was a hero. His violent attitude, which would have been a red flag under other circumstances, was glorified and popularized in the media because we most often saw his violence directed toward taking down villains. It is also important to remember that the hero ranking system is based not on the hero commission’s data, but on popular opinion polls. We, as law enforcement, have to take responsibility for the fact that Endeavor was allowed to remain a hero in spite of his crimes, but society at large is responsible for putting him in the number one spot.”}

“See this is why the hero ranking should have categories.” Midoriya mutters.

{“So, Tsukauchi, you said that the responsibility lies both with the hero commission and with the people who voted for them.” Kizuku leaned forward. “Do you believe the hero system is broken?”}

“Yes.”
“Absolutely.”
“I have ideas.”

{“I would not go that far.” Tsukauchi replied. “But I can confidently say that reforms are obviously needed if we expect the system to fulfill its responsibility to keep the people of Japan safe. Part of the purpose of our ongoing investigation is to determine what reforms need to happen so that nothing like this

happens again."}

"I get the feeling this is coming too little too late." Jiro comments.

"Yes, I don't see everything getting better before getting worse." Yaomomo agrees.

{Kizuku smiled, "Next question. In the last year and a half, a majority of hero deaths have been linked to Mastermind, most notably the death of the former number-one hero, All Might. Do you believe that Mastermind was behind Endeavor's murder as well?"}

"Obviously."
"Duh."
"State the obvious why don't ya?"

{Tsukauchi grit his teeth at yet another reminder of his failure. "Mastermind has been known to work extensively with the League of Villains, of which both Dabi and Freezerburn are members. There were also a lot of moving parts in the operation and the plan relied on exploiting the weaknesses of Endeavor's quirk, both of which are hallmarks of Mastermind's murder plans. So while we have not recovered any written plans tying Mastermind to Endeavor's murder, it is safe to assume that yes, he was most likely involved."}

"Unfortunately." Iida sighs.

{"The police and media have known about Mastermind's existence for quite some time." Kizuku smiled. "So why hasn't he been caught yet? He is obviously a serious threat to society, and isn't it the heroes' job to eliminate those?"}

"Hey, we're kinda being held hostage here!" Hawks remarks.

"Not interested in seeing myself die any time soon." Mirko agrees.

{Tsukauchi clenched his fists. He couldn't let her get to him. "We have people working around the clock to uncover Mastermind's identity because we believe that is the only way we will be able to safely resolve the situation without risking more lives, especially since Mastermind has proven time and again that he is willing and able to kill both heroes and civilians. However, the same qualities that have enabled him to kill so many top-rated heroes are the ones that make him so difficult to find and catch.

He is highly intelligent and extremely careful, but we have heroes working the case that are able to match him in intelligence, so it is only a matter of time before we catch him."

"I would prefer it not be taking so long." Nedzu remarks calmly.

{"Alright." Kizuki said. "I believe we are almost out of time, so this will be my last question. In the last six months, we have lost two number-one heroes to Mastermind, who is beginning to be called the number-one villain in Japan. How do you think this bodes for hero society as a whole and, more specifically, Hawks, who is next in line for the number one spot?"}

"Oh shit!" Hawks exclaims.

{Tsukauchi shook his head. "I honestly can't say. Both heroes were killed by villains who had a distinct reason to target them, All Might because he was the symbol of peace and Endeavor because of a personal grudge. Mastermind himself, however, is not purposely going after number-one heroes, so I do not believe Hawks is in any more danger now than he was a few months ago. As for society, we will simply have to wait and see."}

"Oh, that was a jinx wasn't it?" Hawks asks "I'm so dead."

{Kizuku nodded and stood. "Perfect. Thank you again for this opportunity detective. I hope to see you again."

Tsukauchi gave a strained smile and walked her out. He gave a sigh of relief as she got into a car that was waiting for her at the curb. He never wanted to do that again.}

"And I will have to, I just know it." Tsukauchi remarks.

{He went back inside and got out the Mastermind file, even though he'd practically memorized it at this point. It had been months since All Might's death and still, they were no closer to catching him. Nedzu had complained that his fur was losing its shine because of the stress of the case, but he was the only one capable of getting inside Mastermind's head. Tsukauchi shook his head and closed the file. Maybe it was time he got a little sleep.}

"Good luck with that."
"Mood."
"Preaching to the choir."
"What's next?"

“First friend, first friend, first friend!”

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

V:tGG Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

Izuku takes the plunge and tries to make a friend.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}
{_Paragraph break

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

Viridian: The Green Guide

Friendship

{All the confidence that Izuku had felt as he ran out the door with the intention of making a friend had slowly dissipated during his train ride to the hardware store. He didn't even know if Kaminari was working today, and even if he *was* working, what was Izuku supposed to say to him?}

"Just about anything. I'm very friendly." Kaminari claims.

"Yeah, he'll be a great friend!" Ashido agrees.

"No pressure." Sero adds.

"Friendship is manly!" Kirishima agrees.

{*Hey, sorry if this makes me sound like a stalker, but I'm not actually here to buy anything, I just wanted you to be my friend because I'm desperate and lonely. Wanna hang out?*}

"Be like Shadows. Lean into the stalker vibes." Shinsou suggests Midoriya shoves him over a bit in retaliation as the boy grins. Ururaka snickers as Iida pointedly looks away from the group.

{Izuku grimaced. Yeah, *that* wouldn't be creepy at all. Maybe if he had an excuse to be there...he could use this as an opportunity to update his gear, right? When he'd gone out last night, had his

gear all been in good shape? His pipes were fine, he hadn't needed his knife, but it was probably still sharp since he didn't actually use it all that often, and his slingshot was still good. What else did he even need?}

"Armor preferably." Aizawa grumbles.

"But that would be illegal." Mic mentions.

"Damned loopholes." Aizawa grumbles.

{Before he could even decide, Izuku was walking through the parking lot of the hardware store. Was it too late to turn around? He shouldn't have told Mom about this, because now there were two people who would be disappointed in him if he chickened out. Could he make up some sort of story? It would probably be a lot of work to maintain a fake friendship, but he was already leading a double life with his vigilantism, so he could do it if he needed to, but then Mom and Eraserhead would be disappointed with him for lying to them. Ugh! What was he supposed to do?}

"He's spiraling again." Hagakure whines.

Ojirou pats her shoulder "It's only temporary."

{He didn't know if it made it more or less awkward that he didn't even make it into the store before he saw Kaminari. His apron was thrown casually over his shoulder as he walked away from the store, so he must have just gotten off his shift. He was fiddling with his phone as he put some earbuds in, but what caught Izuku's attention was the fact that he had the USB end of a phone charger stuck in his mouth.}

"Of course, the analyst would react to that." Jiro rolls her eyes.

"It does raise some questions" Momo states.

{"Can you really charge your phone like that?"}

"Yep!" Kaminari chirps.

{Kaminari yelped and lost his footing as he stumbled back, wincing as he fell hard on the asphalt. Izuku ran forward to help him up, panicking even more than he had been the past few minutes. He really couldn't do anything right, could he?}

“This kid needs to stop blaming himself for all this” Hawks comments.

Mirko scoffs “If only it was that easy.”

{“I’m so sorry!” Izuku said frantically as he pulled Kaminari to his feet. “I didn’t even mean to ask the question out loud, it just came out and I was curious, but I swear I didn’t mean to scare you and now you probably think I’m really creepy because I just came out of nowhere and…”}

“Whoah whoah whoah, calm down a bit kid.” Spinner comments.

“You should get used to that” Toga remarks poking him in the cheek.

“It’s truly fascinating the difference in the boy’s confidence because of a single bad day” Compress muses.

{Kaminari cut him off with a laugh, “It’s no problem dude, nothing’s broken and I wouldn’t be trying for the hero course if I couldn’t take a few hard knocks.” He rubbed his hip where he’d fallen and chuckled awkwardly, “Not that getting startled that easily is really hero-like, but…”}

“Tell that to Mic” Midnight comments.

“Hey!” Mic reacts.

{Izuku shrunk in on himself, “Sorry. Again. I mean, for knocking you over.”}

“At this point, we could turn his apologies into a drinking game” Dabi suggests.

{“Like I said, it’s no big deal.” Kaminari shrugged. “How ya been? Is your mystery project going well?”}

“It’s had its ups and downs.” Midoriya jokes.

{Izuku startled. Kaminari was talking about his vigilantism, even if he didn’t actually *know* that, “Um...I actually haven’t been able to work on it in a while.” He held up his arm to show Kaminari his cast, “So, uh, yeah, it’s kinda at a standstill.”}

“Except for the hacking” Aizawa drawls.

{”Oof, dude,” Kaminari winced, “broken bones are no fun, but hey, at least you can get all your friends to sign your cast, so

that's cool!"}

"So about that..." Midoriya mumbles under his breath.

{Izuku shrugged sadly. Yeah, he knew that other people had their friends sign their casts, Kacchan had almost the entire grade sign his cast when he'd broken his leg in second grade jumping off the top of the slide before he'd learned how to use his explosions to catch himself. Izuku had signed too because Mom and Auntie Mitsuki had thought it would be cute if his best friend was the first one to sign Kacchan's cast, but when Izuku showed up to school the next day, his signature had been scribbled out with black sharpie and silver explosions had been drawn over it. He'd never tried to sign anyone's cast after that.}

"The hag let him get away with that?" Bakugo asks confused.

{Apparently, his silence was pretty telling, because Kaminari put his hand on his chest in exaggerated shock, "Are you implying that you haven't gotten a single signature yet? That just won't do! Come here, dude."}

"Nice one Kaminari!"
"I want to sign too!"
"Look at our boys making friends."

{Izuku took a few steps forward and his eyes widened as he saw Kaminari pull a sharpie out of his back pocket.

"I guess it's pretty lucky that they make us carry these things during our shift, right?" Kaminari grinned and grabbed Izuku's arm to sign his cast, but then looked at him, suddenly insecure, "Oh, sorry dude, I mean, you might not even want me to sign your cast and here I am, acting like an idiot because I think it's cool and…"}

"No!"
"It is cool!"
"Sign the damn cast!"

{"No!" Izuku cleared his throat, "Um, I mean, I'd be honored if you'd sign my cast, Kaminari. It's just that I don't have a lot of friends, or really any friends, and I mean, you probably think I'm pretty lame and…"}

"No no no, none of that." Kaminari gently scolds Viridian.

{Izuku trailed off as Kaminari actually started writing. He...he had a signature on his cast!}

“The first time you break something after graduation you’ll have a few dozen, kero.” Tsu informs Midoriya.

“I have mixed feelings about that” Midoriya remarks.

“Good, because of friends?” Todoroki asks “And bad, because we fully expect you to break something after graduation?”

“Got it in one.” Midoriya agrees.

{”Are you busy?” Izuku blurted out before he could second guess himself again, “I mean, um, do you want to hang out? You don’t have to! I mean, just because you signed my cast doesn’t mean that you’re obligated to like me or anything…”}

“Dude I’d love to hang out with you!” Kaminari claims.

“This is gonna be a thing” Sero sighs.

{Kaminari glanced between Izuku and the store a few times, “Aren’t you busy? Weren’t you about to buy some stuff for your project?”}

“Nope!” Dark Shadow chirps.

{“Well, actually,” and now came the awkward part, “Um, like I said, I haven’t really been able to work on it because of my arm, but I have this...kinda weird grumpy uncle? And he wants me to try to make friends, because I don’t have any, obviously, because I mean, you can see that because nobody signed my cast and I don’t want to disappoint him, and you’re nice so…” Izuku winced, “I was wondering if you wanted to hang out?”}

“I have to admit I’m a bit distracted by the whole “grumpy uncle” thing.” Joke chuckles.

“I know it’s hilarious” Amplifier agrees.

“Especially when he acts like such a dad” Midnight chimes in.

“I can hear you. You three keep sitting close to me and none of you are quiet.” Aizawa grumbles.

“Oh *now* I see the grumpy uncle thing” Amplifier remarks sending

Joke into a cackling fit while the man in question sighs.

{“So…you came here looking for me because your grumpy uncle made you promise to make friends?” Kaminari asked.}

“Yep.”
“Yes.”
“That’s exactly right.”
“Absolutely.”
“Right on the money.”

{“…yes?”

To his surprise, Kaminari’s face split into a huge grin, “That’s hilarious, dude! Where do you want to go?”}

“And he’s just cool with it?” Monoma asks incredulously.

“Sure seems like it” Setsuna snarks.

{Izuku’s jaw dropped, “Wait, really? You’re not creeped out? And you’re not too busy?”}

“That’s what he said nerd” Bakugo huffs.

{“Dude, I *always* have time to hang out.” Kaminari said. “Mom says I’m the definition of a social butterfly, but then again, that might just be the ADHD.” He shrugged, “Either way, I’m not gonna say no to a new friend.”}

“Uh…” Kaminari says intelligently.

Meanwhile…

“AD-what now?” Mic asks.

“Was that in his file?” Midnight continues.

“No, it was not.” Aizawa growls.

“I’ll add him to the schedule.” Hound Dog remarks.

{“O-ok…” Izuku said. “Um, there’s a park nearby, if you wanna go there?”}

“Park day park day *park day park day* **park day park day!”**

{Izuku had passed the park a few times during his vigilante hours, and at two in the morning, it was a fairly popular spot for drug deals. Hopefully, it was a little different when the sun was still up. It wasn't a very long walk, and Izuku didn't really know what to talk about. It had been so long since he'd actually had a friend that he had no idea what he was doing, and just being himself would probably scare Kaminari away like it had everyone else, and now he'd been quiet for too long and talking now would just make everything weird, but if he didn't talk then that was even weirder and…}

"What's wrong with a quiet walk?" Yaomomo asks.

"Nothing it's just something that happens when people are more comfortable with each other instead of a first hang out" Jiro explains.

{Kaminari was apparently braver than he was, because he was the one to break the silence, "So what's your name, dude? I don't think you actually told me, and if you did, then I forgot it. Actually, that's probably more likely, I'm kind of an idiot. I can keep calling you dude, but, you know, usually, friends know each other's names."}

"Dude, do you really have problems with names like that?" Sero asks.

"Sometimes" Kaminari murmurs.

{Izuku chuckled awkwardly. Great, yet another way he'd completely messed this up, "Um, it's Izuku Midoriya. Sorry."}

"Take a shot." Dabi jokes.

{"Stop apologizing, dude!" Kaminari said, "Is Midoriya your real name? I mean, it's a cool name and all, don't get me wrong, but it seems a little too on the nose, what with your hair and eyes and everything, you know?"}

"Yeah, but a lot of families changed their names to match their quirks" Ashido mentions.

"Or color in his case" Sero adds.

{"Um, yeah." Midioriya said, "Green is kinda the dominant gene in my family, so I think that's where the name came from, I really don't know." He needed to get the conversation off of him. He wasn't used to talking about himself and it was surprisingly

uncomfortable. “So, uh, with everything that happened earlier, you never answered my question. Can you really charge your phone by sticking the charger in your mouth?”}

“He can, he does, he’s pretty much the class charger.” Hagakure giggles.

{Kaminari laughed, “Yeah, it works pretty well. A lot of my friends at school will use me for that, so I’m pretty used to it. And it’s nice that I never have to worry about a dead battery.”}

“Use? Kami, you know you could say no right?” Kristina asks him.

“Well, I do now, but at first...” Kaminari rubs the back of his neck.

“What? Did we make you feel that way?” Ashido asks “We didn’t mean to!”

“Hey, I know, it’s okay.” Kaminari starts trying to calm her down.

{Izuku’s eyes shone as he thought about the possibilities, “Does that mean that your quirk is constantly producing electricity? Do you have to think about directing the electricity into the charger or does it just go there automatically? If you consciously direct the electricity, does the phone charge faster…” Izuku suddenly realized he was rambling and slammed his mouth shut. So much for not being himself.}

“No! Keep rambling!” Kaminari whines.

“Just ask when we get home Dunce-Face.” Bakugo scoffs.

{Kaminari, however, didn’t seem put off by his questions, just a little intimidated, “I don’t have to think about it, no, but I can’t actually direct the electricity I produce. It’s pretty annoying because it just builds up around my body and I can discharge it, but it kinda just goes everywhere.” he grimaced, “I’m hoping UA will help me fix that.”}

“Wait, why not go to a quirk counselor if that’s all he wants?” Koda asks quietly.

“Quirk counselors can be expensive and the public ones are underfunded and overworked” Shoji whispers back.

{They had arrived at the park by that point and found an empty

bench to sit on. Thankfully, it was just a normal park during the day, with no drug deals or other villains in sight. That would have been pretty embarrassing. Izuku couldn't stop himself from grabbing his notebook, glad that he'd thought to grab his bag on the way out the door, "So you can produce and discharge electricity, but can't aim it. Do you think that you would be able to with practice, or is that just an inborn limitation of your quirk?"}

"All good questions" Kaminari states.

{"I've been trying for years, so I think it's just a natural limit." Kaminari frowned, "Or one of them, at least."

That last part was grumbled under his breath, which made Izuku even more curious.}

Iida sighs.

"The essence of being a hero..." Midoriya starts.

"Is sticking your nose where it is not wanted" Todoroki finishes.

{"One of them? What are the others?" Izuku's eyes widened as he realized that was probably a really creepy question, "Not that you have to tell me, I just really like quirks and think they're really cool, so I'm sorry if I'm annoying you or anything…"}

"Take a shot" Dabi says.

{Kaminari laughed, "It's not a problem, it's just kind of an embarrassing drawback."

"Oh?" Izuku could think of plenty of heroes that had embarrassing side effects to their quirks. In fact, there had been a kid in the sports festival just that year that had to do most of it naked because of his quirk's limitations.}

Hado snickers at Mirio's expense. The boy himself laughed good-natured.

{"Yeah. Like I said, I can discharge electricity, but if I go over my limits," Kaminari smiled awkwardly, "I kinda fry my brain and turn into an idiot for a while."}

"You can say that again" Jiro remarks.

{Izuku's mind turned over the possibilities. That drawback couldn't be good for Kaminari's brain long term. Did he get headaches from it or did his quirk include a healing component to help his brain recover? He'd mentioned that he had ADHD, so could that be a result of going over his limits? Probably not, but the extra electricity running through his brain would make his mind work faster than the average person's, which would result in ADHD-like symptoms. Oh, Kaminari was waiting for his reaction.}

"Adorable." Hagakure coos.

"Are we not curious about his ADHD being a side effect of his quirk?" Ojirou asks.

"Well, yeah but there isn't anything we can do about it now." Hagakure agrees.

"I guess" Ojiro concedes.

{"What's your limit?"

"Right now?" Izuku nodded and Kaminari thought for a second, "Just under a million volts, but I'm working on raising that in preparation for entrance exams."}

"And I did it!" Kaminari raised his hand for a high five Sero was happy to provide.

{Izuku's eyes widened, "That's really impressive Kaminari!"

Kaminari grinned, "You really think so? I've been kinda worried cause, while my quirk is flashy, it's kinda hard to control. The electricians I've been apprenticing under have been helping me understand the whole electricity thing, but they can't really teach me quirk control, you know?"}

"Shame you couldn't do that." Ashido pouts.

"I can just use an internet rabbit hole." Kaminari dismisses.

Bakigo growled, "Don't pull another all-nighter!"

{Izuku nodded, "Quirks are difficult like that. The only way to really know their limits is to try things out."

"Speaking of quirks, what's yours?" Kaminari asked. "I bet it's some kind of intelligence quirk, right? You're really smart."}

Much of the theater cringed winced or hissed. Even the villains reacted, shifting in anticipation.

“He better react well.” Kaminari narrowed his eyes at the screen.

{Izuku’s smile faded and he scuffed at the dirt with his toe, “Um, I actually don’t...have one?”

Well, at least he’d be able to tell Eraserhead that he’d tried. It had been nice while it lasted, and there was probably some way to get the marker off his cast in case Kaminari didn’t want to be associated with him anymore.}

“It won’t be like that.”
“Hang on.”
“Wait a second.”

{“Oh.” Kaminari said quietly. “Um, what’s that like?”}

pfft
“Really?”
“*That’s* his first thought?”

{Izuku looked up. Kaminari looked vaguely awkward, but in a curious way, like he didn’t know how to react, not like he was trying to figure out a way to get out of the conversation. While there was a little bit of pity, there wasn’t any trace of malice or hatred like Izuku was used to from the kids at school. Was it possible that Kaminari was still giving him a chance, even after knowing he’s quirkless? It seemed like almost too much to hope for.}

“This is going well.” Midoriya remarks.

“Relatively” Shinsou adds.

{“It’s, uh,” Izuku shrugged, “I guess I just don’t know any different.”

Kaminari thought about that for a minute, “That makes sense. I can’t imagine having a different quirk or not having a quirk at all, so I guess it’s kinda the same for you, huh?”}

“This is so awkward.” Monoma groans.

“Shh” Kendo hushes him.

{Izuku nodded. Kaminari's response was...refreshingly neutral. It almost made him afraid to ask his next question, "Do...do you hate me now?"}

"The fact that he feels the need to ask that..." Rock Lock grumbles.

{Kaminari just looked confused, "Ok, I know that I'm not very smart, but why would I hate you?"

"Because," Izuku wished he had enough courage to say the truth in anything louder than a whisper, "I'm useless."}

"The fuck you are!"
"Hell no!"
"You are not!"

{Kaminari frowned, "Are you saying that because you're quirkless or is it because of something else? Because I haven't met many quirkless people, so I have no idea if that's what you're referring to, and I don't know you well enough yet to figure out if you're actually useless or not. But, hey, if you don't hate me for being stupid, then I won't hate you for being useless. Deal?"}

"That's one way to do it." Aizawa comments.

"Is anyone else concerned about how much Kaminari is putting himself down?" Midnight asks.

"Something to watch out for" Mic suggests.

{Izuku smiled and nodded energetically, "Deal!"

Kaminari didn't hate him yet! He was giving him a chance! It took all Izuku's self-control to hold back the grateful tears that threatened to fall, but he didn't want to ruin his chances at friendship by being a crybaby.}

"Ah, Deku." Ururaka coos.

"Stop." Midoriya groans.

{Kaminari smiled, dissipating the heavy atmosphere, "So, does this mean we're friends now? Because if so, I'm gonna need your number."

This time, Izuku couldn't hold back his tears, making Kaminari panic, "Oh no, what did I say?"}

“Hahaha.”
“Nothing Kaminari.”
“You get used to it.”
“He’s just like that.”
“You didn’t fuck this up yet.”

“Okay, okay on to the next one!” Ashido cries out waving her arms to get everyone's attention so they would settle down.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

End Notes

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Updates at the mercy of my ADHD

Works inspired by this one

Reacting to the FTWOAN Series by CrazyHope13, Diamond Dimensions [DISCONTINUED] by EmeraldEclipse, The MidoriVerse React To Each Other by NoOneSpecial821

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